Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs* in its Intellectual Context

Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition

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By

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To Prof. John M. Dillon
Mentor, Spiritual Father, and Good Soul

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon – don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as your thought is lofty, as long as a rare
excitement stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon – you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.
...

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it last for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

Ithaka by KONSTANTINOS P. KAVAFIS (Trans. EDMUND KEELEY and PHILIP SHERRARD)

⁘

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Finally, this work honours all the virtuous and wise people who dedicated their lives to opening a path to future generations towards knowledge of and necessity for pursuing an ethical way of life. I hope that I have heard the echo of their voices and dedicated my time to following in their footsteps.

Abbreviations

Aristotle

De Cael.	*De Caelo*
De Gen. Anim.	*De Generatione Animalium*
Met.	*Metaphysica*
Phys.	*Physica*

Augustine

Civ. Dei	*De Civitate Dei*
Serm.	*Sermones*

Cornutus

Compendium	*Theologiae Graecae Compendium*

Diogenes Laertius

D.L.	*Vitae Philosophorum*

Eunapius

VS	*Vitae Sophistarum*

Euripides

Hel.	*Helena*

Eusebius

PE	*Praeparatio Evangelica*
Hist. Ecc.	*Historia Ecclesiastica*

Hesiod

Op.	*Opera et Dies*
Th.	*Theogonia*

Homer

Il.	*Iliad*
Od.	*Odyssey*

Iamblichus

VP	*Vita Pythagorica*

Origen

Cont. Cels.	*Contra Celsum*

Plato

Crat.	*Cratylus*
Crit.	*Critias*
Euthyd.	*Euthydemus*
Gorg.	*Gorgias*
Leg.	*Leges*
Parm.	*Parmenides*
Phil.	*Philebus*
Polit.	*Politicus*
Prot.	*Protagoras*
Rep.	*Respublica*
Soph.	*Sophista*
Symp.	*Symposium*
Theaet.	*Theaetetus*
Tim.	*Timaeus*

Plotinus

Enn.	*Enneades*

Plutarch

De Defectu	*De Defectu Oraculorum*
De Facie	*De Facie Quae in Orbe Lunae Apparet*
De Genio	*De Genio Socratis*
De Iside	*De Iside et Osiride*
Plat. Quaest.	*Platonicae Quaestiones*

Porphyry

Ad Marcellam	*Epistula ad Marcellam*
Ad Gaurum	*To Gaurus on How Embryos Are Ensouled*
De Abstinentia	*De Abstinentia ab esu animalium*
De Antro	*De Antro Nympharum*
In Tim.	*Commentaria in Platonis Timaeum*
Phil. Orac.	*De Philosophia ex Oraculis*
Sententiae	*Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*
Tetrabiblos	*Introductio in Ptolemaei Tetrabiblum*
VPlot.	*Vita Plotini*
VP	*Vita Pythagorae*

Proclus

In Alc.	*In Platonis Alcibiadem*
In Crat.	*In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria*
In Parm.	*In Platonis Parmenidem*

In Remp. *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*
In Tim. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*

Stobaeus
Anth. *Anthologium*

Tacitus
Ann. *Annales*
Hist. *Historiae*

Standard works
BNJ *Brill's New Jacoby*, ed. I. Worthington, Leiden, 2007–.
CCAG *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, eds. F. Cumont and F. Boll, Brussels, 1898–53.
CIMRM *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, ed. M. Vermaseren, Leiden, 2 vols., 1956–60
DK *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, eds. H. Diels and W. Kranz, Berlin, 1954.
FGrH *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby, Berlin and Leiden, 1923–.
LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth Edition with Revised Supplement*, eds. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott and H.S. Jones, Oxford, 1996.
OF *Orphicorum Fragmenta,* ed. O. Kern. Berlin, 1922.
PGM *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, ed. K. Preisendanz, Leipzig, 1928–31.
P.G. *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris, 1857–66.
RhGr *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. Leonhard von Spengel, Leipzig, 1853–56.
SSR *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae*, ed. G. Giannantoni, Naples, 1983–90.
SVF *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim, Leipzig, 1903–21.

Introduction

The Neoplatonic philosopher, Porphyry, was born in Tyre in Phoenicia, probably in 234 C.E.[1] According to Porphyry's own *Life of Plotinus* and Eunapius' report, he had distinguished ancestors, and his original name (in Phoenician) was Malchus, meaning 'king.'[2] He studied rhetoric and grammar with Longinus in Athens before joining the circle of Plotinus (204/5–270 C.E.) in Rome in 262–268 C.E. Porphyry collected and edited the works of his teacher Plotinus under the title, *Enneads,* and divided them into six books, consisting of nine treatises each, prefaced by his own *Life of Plotinus*. He himself is believed to have written sixty works, but, unfortunately, most are lost or survive only in fragmentary form. Fully or substantially extant works include, apart from *On the Cave of the Nymphs* and *Life of Plotinus* (*Vita Plotini*), also a large excerpt of a *Life of Pythagoras* (*Vita Pythagorae*), *Homeric Questions*, *Letter to Marcella* (written to his wife, Marcella, *Ad Marcellam*), *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (*De Abstinentia*), *Starting-points Leading to the Intelligibles* (*Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*, *Sententiae* in short), *Isagoge* (*Introduction*) to Aristotle's *Organon*, *Introduction to Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos* and a *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories.* In addition, Porphyry is often credited with the authorship of an anonymously transmitted *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* and he almost certainly wrote a likewise anonymously transmitted work on embryology, attributed in the manuscripts to Galen, and entitled *To Gaurus on How Embryos Are Ensouled* (*Ad Gaurum*). There are also fragments of many lost works such as a history of philosophy, a *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, *Letter to Anebo* (*Epistula ad Anebonem*), several treatises, such as *On Images* (*Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*), *On the Styx*, *Philosophy from Oracles* (*De Philosophia ex Oraculis*), *On the Return of the Soul* (*De Regressu Animae*), *On What Is in Our Power* (or *On Free-will*), and a large work *Against the Christians* (*Contra Christianos*).

As this corpus suggests, Porphyry had very broad interests, covering fields as diverse as grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, logic, music, religion and literary criticism, and his work had a deep impact on his contemporaries and successors. The fourth-century historian and sophist, Eunapius, praises Porphyry as a polymath (*VS* 4.2.2-3), and, in his *City of God,* Augustine (354–430 C.E.) calls him 'the most learned of the philosophers' (*doctissimus philosophorum, Civ. Dei* 19.22). In the translation of Boethius, Porphyry's *Isagoge* was used as a standard textbook on logic until the end of the Middle Ages. Because so

1 Eunapius, *VS* 4.1.1.

2 *VPlot*. 17; Eunapius, *VS* 4.1.4.

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much of his output does not survive, it is difficult to establish to what extent Porphyry generated original philosophical ideas, particularly ideas independent of his teacher Plotinus. There is a common tendency in modern scholarship to see him primarily as a follower on the path set out by Plotinus. Hadot argued nearly forty years ago that Porphyry is a much more original thinker than has been thought,[3] despite earlier claims that his thought lacked originality,[4] and there has been a growing consensus that this assessment is correct. One of my aims will be to show that, at least in his approach to poetry, myths, religion and rituals, Porphyry went well beyond Plotinus, developing original ideas that are on a par with those of his contemporary, Iamblichus (c. 250–330 C.E.), a pupil of Porphyry.

As for existing scholarship on the Porphyrian treatise to which this book is dedicated, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey* (*Περὶ τοῦ ἐν Ὀδυσσείᾳ τῶν νυμφῶν ἄντρου*, *De Antro Nympharum*; hereafter *De Antro*), Laura Simonini's *L'antro delle Ninfe,* in 1986, is an extensive annotated edition, with an Italian translation, whose text and apparatus are taken over from the Arethusa Monograph edition in 1969. Simonini situates *De Antro* within a wide range of disciplines and offers a commentary of the treatise at large and makes references to various ancient sources. Simonini's references related to Porphyry's other works are compatible with those in this book, e.g., her reference to *Sententia* 20 for the definition of Matter, to *Sententia* 29, *Ad Gaurum* 11.3 and *De Regressu Animae* for the theory of *pneuma-ochema*, to *Sententia* 32 for the connection of the cathartic virtues with the image of the goddess Athena (*phronesis*) and Odysseus sitting under the olive tree. In her article 'Homers Nymphengrotte in der Deutung des Porphyrios,' Karin Alt does not present a detailed interpretation of the treatise, but rather provides the outline of each section; she argues that, although Porphyry's interpretation is based on a plan, it lacks consistency – a claim which is at odds with what I here attempt to show.[5] This book considers the treatise as a coherent and consistent literary project with its thematic subjects indicated below, its aim, Porphyry's other works, and his intellectual style. The treatise indeed looks like a reflection of the material world that contains dichotomies, such as dark vs beautiful; Platonic cave vs Mithraic cave; southern region vs northern region; the gate for mortals vs the gate for immortals; summer solstices vs winter solstices; *genesis* vs *apogenesis*, etc., where

3 Hadot (1968); Simmons (2015), 1 n. 4.

4 Bidez (1913), 133; Dodds (1970), 864–5; Smith (1974), xii; Lamberton (1983), 4; Simmons (2015), 1 n. 3.

5 Alt (1998), 466–87. See Pépin (1965), 243–9 for Porphyry's deliberate use of pluralism as an exegetical method; on the same matter see also Lamberton (1986), 120–1 and Simonini (2010/1986), 19.

Porphyry brings together different allegorical interpretations that project his overall aim.

A significant recent paper on *De Antro* is Mark Edwards' 'Porphyry's 'Cave of the Nymphs' and the Gnostic Controversy.' Edwards, here, compares certain features of *De Antro*, particularly Porphyry's employment of Zoroaster,[6] Mithras as the Maker and Father of all and the Mithraic cave, with Plotinus' *Ennead* 2.9, a treatise written against a group of Gnostics, Christian Heretics, while Porphyry was a member of Plotinus' school.[7] He concludes that Porphyry intended to write the treatise, not only as a work of interpretation, but as a manual for interpreters, directed in particular against the Gnostics, showing that the truth is reached, not immediately, but gradually.[8] Edwards also discusses Homer's influence on the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry in his paper 'Scenes from the Later Wanderings of Odysseus,'[9] in which he connects the Delphic Oracle in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 22) with *De Antro* and shows that the oracle, which reveals the fate of Plotinus' soul after his death, bears resemblance to the description of Odysseus' arrival in Phaeacia. In contrast to Plotinus, who is never deceived by tricks of the material world, as Edwards points out, Porphyry's Odysseus in *De Antro* achieves his ultimate goal only when he gets rid of his earthly life.

De Antro has also regularly been discussed by scholars interested in the field of ancient allegorical interpretation, most prominently by Peter T. Struck, in *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts*,[10] and Robert Lamberton, in *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition,*[11] and other works. Struck offers a wide-ranging assessment of allegorical interpretation from the Presocratics to the Neoplatonists, along with the development of the concept of the 'symbol' as an authentic token or divine sign, from passwords used by the Pythagoreans and initiates of the Orphic, Dionysian and Eleusinian mysteries, via an ontological concept in Stoic language theory, to a sign of divinity itself in Iamblichus and Proclus (412–485 C.E.). Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian*, meanwhile, focuses on how the Neoplatonists read Homer in line with their own philosophy, and particularly how they interpreted Odysseus as a symbol of the descended soul trying to return to the intelligible realm. The most recent monographs that touch upon *De Antro* in the context of a discussion of allegory are Crystal

6 See de Jong (1997), 317–23 for a summary of Zoroaster's place in Greek and Latin literature.
7 Edwards (1996), 89–94.
8 Edwards (1996), 95–100.
9 Edwards (1988), 509–21.
10 Struck (2004), 71–5.
11 Lamberton (1986), 119–33.

Addey's *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods*, in which she explores Porphyry's method of allegorical exegesis in *De Antro* while examining the common features of allegory and oracles;[12] and Aaron P. Johnson's *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, in which he compares *De Antro* with another Homeric study by Porphyry, *On the Styx*, pointing out their structural and methodological similarities.[13] All of these works throw important light on Porphyry's allegorical method and the place of *De Antro* in the history of allegorical interpretation.

Scholars of Mithraism have likewise shown a great interest in *De Antro*, because it offers the only reliable cosmological discussion of a *mithraeum*,[14] the 'cave' where the followers of Mithras worship, to which Porphyry refers in *De Antro* 6 and 24. *De Antro* 6 provides significant information about the function of the cave in the mysteries of Mithras and *De Antro* 24 mentions the seat of Mithras at the equinoxes in relation to the solstitial gates of the soul. The state of the question and what can, and cannot, be safely inferred from *De Antro* regarding Mithraism is most clearly laid out in Roger Beck's most recent work, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire,* in which he builds on ideas expounded in many earlier publications.[15] Beck posits that in a *mithraeum*, the place of cult worship that represented the Mithraic cosmos, the initiates acquired information about the process of 'soul journeying,' the descent of one's soul at birth and its ascent at death, through a ritualised execution of the soul's heavenly journey. Beck convincingly argues for close analogies between Mithraic doctrine and the Neoplatonic ideas of Porphyry while avoiding speculative reconstructions of the precise relationship between the two paradigms. Such constructions were attempted most prominently by Robert Turcan in his *Mithras Platonicus*, in which he posits influence of the cult of Mithras on the Platonic tradition from the first century B.C.E. onward and uses the references to Mithraism in *De Antro* to argue that Mithraism and Neoplatonism are, in essence, the same.[16] My analysis of *De Antro* here is compatible with Beck's argument and puts it on more solid ground by situating *De Antro* more comprehensively within Porphyry's wider philosophical thought.

There are two modern English translations of *De Antro*, whose dates are indicative of the lack of scholarly attention for the treatise in his own right: one was produced by a postgraduate seminar class in 1969, conducted by

12 Addey (2014a), 57–71.

13 Johnson (2013), 31–7.

14 Beck (2006), 17 and 85–7; Ulansey (1991), 18; Beck (1987), 308 n. 37.

15 Beck (2006); earlier work collected in Beck (2004).

16 Turcan (1975); see also Dillon (1990/1977), XVII/79–85 for a detailed review of Turcan's book.

the distinguished Neoplatonic scholar, L.G. Westerink,[17] the other by Robert Lamberton in 1983. These and earlier versions (such as the one published by Thomas Taylor in 1823) include little or no annotation and there is no comprehensive analysis of the entire treatise. Throughout the book, I will use the Greek text produced by the 1969 Postgraduate Seminar, which is based on a comprehensive consideration of the manuscript tradition. Earlier Greek editions of the treatise were published, in many cases with Latin translations, by J. Lascaris (1518), Lucas Holstenius (1630), J. Barnes (1711), R.M. Van Goens (1765), R. Hercher (1858), and A. Nauck (1887).

De Antro has been generally given little attention in discussions of Neoplatonic philosophy, as it is deemed to be of little importance for establishing Porphyrian doctrine. Scholarship on this doctrine, however, has thrived over the last decade or so. A number of important studies[18] have centered on the religious philosophy of Porphyry and Porphyrian soteriology, as expounded, for example, in his *On the Return of the Soul* (*De Regressu Animae*) and in his *Philosophy from Oracles* (*De Philosophia ex Oraculis*), both works which also enlighten his stance on traditional religious practices. The philosophical analysis of *De Antro* in this work builds on this recent scholarship, as it aims to place the treatise within the context of Porphyry's other works and proposes that it contains significant philosophical ideas, particularly on the relationship between the soul and body, embodiment, demonology and the concept of salvation of the soul. Apart from these, there are a number of major studies addressing the question on Porphyry's reconciliation of Aristotle with Platonism.[19]

Porphyry starts his allegorical exegesis of Homer's description of the cave of the nymphs in which Odysseus places the gifts he has received from the Phaeacians at *Odyssey* 13.102-112, a passage cited in full at the beginning of the treatise after the briefest possible indication of the project on which Porphyry is embarking:[20]

> (1.1-13) Ὅτι ποτὲ Ὁμήρῳ αἰνίττεται τὸ ἐν Ἰθάκῃ ἄντρον, ὃ διὰ τῶν ἐπῶν τούτων διαγράφει λέγων.
> αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη,

17 Participants in the seminar were: John M. Duffy, Philip F. Sheridan, L.G. Westerink and Jeffrey A. White.

18 Simmons (2015); Addey (2014a); Johnson (2013); Smith (2012), 30–43; Smith (2011); Chase (2010), 383–405; Smith (2010), 325–57; Chiaradonna (2008), 1–30; Wilberding (2008), 406–32; Clark (2007), 127–40; Karamanolis (2006, 2007), and (2004), 79–113; Chase (2004a), 77–93; Chase (2004b), 37–58.

19 See Adamson (2015), 205–20 on this subject and the latest studies on Neoplatonism.

20 Section and line-numbers follow the Stefanus edition; unless otherwise indicated the translations are my own.

ἀγχόθι δ᾽ αὐτῆς ἄντρον ἐπήρατον ἠεροειδές,
ἱρὸν νυμφάων αἱ νηϊάδες καλέονται.
ἐν δὲ κρητῆρές τε καὶ ἀμφιφορῆες ἔασιν
λάϊνοι· ἔνθα δ᾽ ἔπειτα τιθαιβώσσουσι μέλισσαι.
ἐν δ᾽ ἱστοὶ λίθεοι περιμήκεες, ἔνθα τε νύμφαι
φάρε᾽ ὑφαίνουσιν ἁλιπόρφυρα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·
ἐν δ᾽ ὕδατ᾽ ἀενάοντα. δύω δέ τέ οἱ θύραι εἰσίν,
αἱ μὲν πρὸς Βορέαο καταιβαταὶ ἀνθρώποισιν,
αἱ δ᾽ αὖ πρὸς Νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι· οὐδέ τι κείνῃ
ἄνδρες ἐσέρχονται, ἀλλ᾽ ἀθανάτων ὁδός ἐστιν.

(1.1-13) One wonders what the cave in Ithaca symbolises for Homer, the one which he describes in the following verses:
At the head of harbour there is an olive tree with acuminate leaves,
and near it, a lovely and dark cave,
consecrated to the nymphs called Naiads.
In the cave are mixing bowls and amphoras,
made of stone. There, bees store up honey.
In the cave, there are very high stone looms, where the nymphs
weave garments of sea-purple, a wonder to be seen,
and in it there are ever-flowing waters. It has two entrances:
one is northerly, for humans to descend,
the other, southerly, is more divine; through that entrance
men do not enter, but it is the way of immortals.

In his exegesis of Homer's cave 'at the head of the harbour' and its elements and attributes – that is, the olive tree, the Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple garments on stone looms, ever-flowing waters, stone mixing bowls and amphoras, bees storing up honey, and the two entrances, one oriented towards the South for the immortals to ascend and the other towards the North for the mortals to descend – Porphyry touches on a remarkable number of philosophical concepts. These include, for example, Anaximander's *apeiron*, Heraclitus' flux theory, the Pythagoreans' orderly arrangement of the cosmos, and Plato's doctrine of participation in the Forms. Porphyry uses these concepts to define the characteristics of the material realm, which is the inferior principle in the process of the creation of the cosmos, symbolised by the cave of the nymphs. Interpretations of this kind are in line with Plotinus' view that the doctrine of Plato should be explained and clarified through the teachings of other philosophical schools, including the Stoics. Furthermore, the treatise is also a clear manifestation of Porphyry's great interest in the association and dissociation

of the soul and body. In his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 13), Porphyry tells how he interrogated Plotinus for three days about the precise association of the soul with the body. In *De Antro,* he provides a wide range of philosophical and astrological explanations of these processes through the concepts of *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), *genesis* (γένεσις), *apogenesis* (ἀπογένεσις), and the gates of heaven (πύλαι οὐρανοῦ), including the gates of the Sun, the gates of the Sun and the Moon, and the solstitial gates.

In comparison with his *Homeric Questions*, a more philological interpretation of passages in Homer's poems, Porphyry's Homeric interpretation in *De Antro* shows his transformation from a literary critic into a Neoplatonic philosopher. In this regard, *De Antro* can be deemed to be part of a corpus of Porphyrian philosophical writings on the salvation of the soul, aimed partly at the Neoplatonic philosophers, partly at a more general audience. Porphyry seems to have been engaged in enquiries to find the way(s) for salvation of the soul during his life, and to develop this topic in different ways throughout his works.

In *Sententia* 32 (Lamberz),[21] on the other hand, we find that Porphyry provides guidance for the purification of the soul through his classification of the Neoplatonic virtues, that is, the political, the cathartic, the theoretical, and the paradigmatic virtues. All these virtues are related to the purification of the intelligent part of the soul. The political virtues, for example, teach us to live up to the laws of human nature by moderating passions, whereas the aim of the cathartic virtues is the complete removal of passions from the soul. As Rappe observes, in *Sententia* 32, 'these virtues are defined in terms of the soul's ability to direct its attention inwardly, to abide in a state of contemplation, and to become one with the object of contemplation.'[22]

As we have seen, Edwards has argued that Porphyry 'meant to write, not only a work of interpretation, but a manual for interpreters.' I would take this in a somewhat different direction and think that Porphyry uses *De Antro* to educate his disciples. Porphyry's scattered quotations, e.g. his quotation of Plato's *Republic* 7 in *De Antro* 8, brief statements such as his definition of matter in *De Antro* 5, and the plurality of subjects, give the impression that he wrote the treatise for presentation to and discussion in lectures. Of course, symbolism also enables Porphyry to convey his religious and philosophical ideas to his disciples by elaborate explanations. There is already a general consensus among scholars that there is a close connection between *De Antro* and the myth of Er in *Republic* 10, and that *De Antro* is to be read as an ethical text, as

21 Section numbers follow Lamberz (1975).

22 Rappe (2000), 18.

will be seen later. In addition to this, I shall seek to demonstrate that *De Antro* is closely connected with Porphyry's philosophical works, particularly passages of his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, *Sententiae* and *De Abstinentia*. It is primarily in its readings of individual sections of *De Antro* against these philosophical works that the original contribution of this work resides. I will, for example, consider the perception of the darkness of the material realm in *De Antro* in light of the noetic triad in Porphyry's commentary on the *Parmenides*; read his assignments of the different regions to the gods, *daimones*, mortals and more divine beings against his commentary on the story of Atlantis in the *Timaeus*; situate Porphyry's description of Homer's Naiad Nymphs weaving a sea-purple garment vis-à-vis *Ad Gaurum*; interpret the 'divinities' shedding of powers' in the context of *Sententia* 37 and *De Abstinentia*; place the gates of the Sun and the Moon in the context of Porphyry's commentary on *Timaeus* 36d2-7 (F 72 Sodano) and 38c9-d6 (F 79 Sodano); relate his identification of the goddess Athena to the doctrine of virtues in *Sententia* 32.

De Antro as the product of a highly intelligent thinker (not an undisciplined or chaotic mind, as might appear on first reading), proves that symbols and images are a key language and tool for the Neoplatonists to reveal their doctrines, similar to the Pythagoreans' use of dual discourses, direct and symbolic. According to reports by Porphyry (*VP* 37) and Iamblichus (*VP* 18.81), the Pythagoreans divided their disciples into Learners and Hearers, the former being given elaborate explanations and the latter assumed to be capable of studying philosophy from mere maxims without arguments. In his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 7.1-2) , Porphyry's division of Plotinus' disciples into two groups as ἀκροαταί, 'hearers,' and ζηλωταί, 'zealous students,' seems to imply that the Pythagorean tradition was maintained in Plotinus' school in Rome. Porphyry interprets the literary symbols in *De Antro* both as transcendent being and as natural realities. Following, apparently, the Pythagoreans' mode of examination, Porphyry calls them 'images' (εἰκόνες) when he explains principles perceived by the senses, and 'symbols' (σύμβολα), when his intention is to explain abstract principles. Thus, symbols function as contemplative objects for the students, and their meanings allow them to develop philosophical awareness and consciousness through the use of sensual and mental powers.

Starting from the assumption that Porphyry uses *De Antro* to explain his philosophical ideas, and to educate his disciples through allegorical interpretation, my overarching aim is to offer an exegesis of Porphyry's *De Antro* against the backdrop of his wider philosophical oeuvre. Inspired most likely by Numenius, Porphyry's allegorical method attempts to unfold the deeper meaning of Homer's text by asking meticulous questions about the literary symbols of his verses and elaborately examining them in light of these questions. In this

book, I have chosen and organised my topics of discussion in accordance with Porphyry's questions as they emerge from *De Antro*. These are the nature, method and purpose of allegorical interpretation, the features of the material realm symbolised by Homer's cave of the nymphs, the association of the soul with the body, and the ways of descent and ascent of the soul.

In accordance with, on the one hand, my aim to situate *De Antro* within the context of Porphyry's works and, on the other hand, the reading of the treatise's central interests as the association and dissociation of the soul and the body, and, above all, the salvation of the soul, the discussions focus on a specific set of Porphyry's philosophical works, namely relevant passages of *De Abstinentia* and *Sententiae*, surviving fragments of Porphyry's commentaries on the *Timaeus*, the *Parmenides* and the *Republic*, *Ad Gaurum*, and other fragmentary works that are related to sections of *De Antro*. I hope that this first detailed and thematic study of *De Antro* in English will contribute to a recognition of Porphyry as a complex, original and interesting thinker and will demonstrate that, for Porphyry, allegorical interpretation is an important tool to teach Platonic 'philosophy,' and the 'philosophical way of life,' at the meeting point of *muthos* and *logos*.

CHAPTER 1

Allegory as a Way of Thinking in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*

This chapter begins with a brief survey of the influence of the exegetical practices of the Stoics, the Neopythagoreans Numenius and Cronius on *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, and, more broadly, the relationship between Homer, Pythagoras and Plato, and the belief that Homer's poems were seen as repositories of divine truth.[1] It also encompasses important features of *De Antro* such as the organisation of the text, which, in turn, underlines the thematic topics of this book, and the way in which Porphyry uses allegorical concepts, particularly image and symbol, and the issues that form the basis of his interpretation.

1 Preliminary Remarks on Allegorical Interpretation in Later Platonism

During the first centuries of the Roman Empire, a new type of interpretation of myths developed.[2] Platonic philosophers, particularly those strongly influenced by contemporary Pythagorean thought, became interested in analysing myths in terms of symbol and enigma and in searching for their hidden meanings. These philosophers no longer intended to forge a link between the gods and heroes of myth and the physical elements of a philosophical system, but rather to attain higher, abstract truths through interpreting myths. Thus, their primary interest is no longer the physical and historical type of exegesis but metaphysical and mystical allegory.

As Lamberton observes, one of the important developments in the reading of Homer is the use of the Platonic myths to explain Homer's myths in the Platonic circle, and the idea is that their myths had similar structures in terms of meaning.[3] Numenius' exegesis of the myth of Er seems to develop from his commentary on the cave of nymphs of *Odyssey* 13.102-112, as Proclus connects

1 The survey of the history of allegory and allegorical interpretation from before Plato up to the later Platonism has already been told in summary a number of times by Buffière, Lamberton, Brisson, Struck, who have been quoted in various places in this work. Thus, the scope of the survey will be confined to looking at the period starting from the first century B.C.E.

2 Brisson (2004), 32 and 56–63.

3 Lamberton (1986), 37.

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them with each other in his commentary on the *Republic*. This intertextuality of Homer and Plato may also show a common exegetical treatment of their texts established by the interpreters of Homer, which attempts to explain a series of questions and problems about ambiguous passages.[4] Allegoresis, which has its roots half a millennium earlier, gains fresh significance as a tool to connect the sensible world with higher truths, and Neoplatonic allegorical interpretation treats the texts of the poets, notably Homer, as worthy of philosophical reflection in themselves and in step with the dialogues of Plato at a fundamental, symbolical level.

Although Neoplatonism is primarily a continuation of Plato's doctrines, it inevitably embraces numerous concepts and concerns from other philosophical schools, most importantly the Pythagoreans. As Rappe says, 'Neoplatonism is an exegetical tradition, it remains a school that defines itself through its affinity to or even appropriation of privileged texts, that is, the dialogues of Plato.'[5] The Neoplatonists also seem to rely on some external authorities such as Pythagoras, Orpheus and Homer so as to justify equivocalities in the Platonic dialogues. Interpretative or exegetical tradition, therefore, becomes an important ally of dialectic and logic in the Neoplatonic mission to save the human soul.

The circumstances are opaque, but it seems that, in the late Hellenistic and Imperial period, Pythagoreanism experienced a revival. This is evident, for example from Cicero's comments at the beginning of his translation of Plato's *Timaeus*,[6] from the essays on Pythagoras and 'the Pythagorean way of life' composed by Diogenes Laertius, and from Porphyry and Iamblichus a number of centuries later, when Pythagoreanism was still going strong. From these works, Pythagoras emerges as a super-human figure: he is said to have had knowledge of the past through reincarnation, the ability to predict and influence future events, to bilocate, heal illnesses and dispel plagues, and so on (D.L., 8.11-12; Porph., *VP* 29; Iamb., *VP* 28, 92, 135, and 140). Adopting 'the Pythagorean way of life' for all practical purposes meant joining a mystery cult, and this should be kept in mind in assessing the gradual absorption of Pythagorean ideas, approaches, imagery and practices into Platonism during the Empire.

One of the first Platonists to fully embrace Pythagoras was, it seems, Eudorus of Alexandria, who lived in the first century B.C.E. In his commentary on the *Timaeus*, Eudorus attempted to restate Platonic philosophy in Pythagorean terms, according to Plutarch's testimony in his treatise *On the Generation of the*

4 Lamberton (1986), 62–4 n. 66; Dillon (1996b), 364; see also Brisson (2004), 73.

5 Rappe (2000), 119.

6 Dillon (1996b), 115–9.

Soul in the Timaeus. Plutarch may also have drawn on Eudorus as a main source for the ideas of early Academics such as Xenocrates and Crantor.[7]

O'Meara observes that Pythagoreanism was very effective in the second and third centuries C.E. and that the deep influences of Pythagorean symbolism are found in Plotinus' *Enneads*.[8] As we shall see, two Neopythagorean philosophers, Cronius and Numenius, are the main sources of Porphyry in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*. The overall influence of these two Neopythagoreans on Plotinus and his school is found in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, in which Porphyry reports that some contemporaries accused Plotinus of simply plagiarising Numenius' ideas (*VPlot*. 17.1-2),[9] and that Longinus says that Plotinus sets out the principles of Pythagoras and Plato more clearly than Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus and Thrasyllus (*VPlot*. 20.74 and 21.5-9). The works of Numenius and Cronius were read in school seminars (*VPlot*. 14.12). Amelius, the most devoted disciple of Plotinus, collected and copied Numenius' works, learned most of them by heart (*VPlot*. 3.44-45), and wrote a treatise entitled *The Difference between the Doctrines of Plotinus and Numenius*, which he dedicated to Porphyry (*VPlot*. 17.5-6).

Another Neopythagorean influence at the birth of Neoplatonism is Ammonius Saccas, with whom Plotinus studied for more than a decade (*VPlot.* 3). Ammonius, like Socrates many centuries before him, wrote nothing and was not a member of any philosophical school. Following Pythagorean tradition, as Porphyry writes, Plotinus pledged not to reveal Ammonius' teachings, but despite the secrecy agreement, he drew on them in his lectures (*VPlot.* 14.16). However, we do not have any explicit information on Ammonius' specific teachings or secrets he shared with his close students.[10]

Although the influence of Pythagoreanism on Platonism and Neoplatonism has many aspects, symbolism is clearly of essential importance to Pythagoras' oral doctrines. Since the Pythagoreans had trouble with local authorities, they used symbols as a secret language or code in order to identify each other. Symbolic language and gestures were used as proofs of identity or passwords for entry and for accessing different levels of Pythagorean wisdom. Iamblichus refers to these symbols as a sort of secret language or code (*VP* 227); they connected the group members with each other and separated them from the outside world.

7 Ibid., 114–83; Brisson (2004), 57.

8 O'Meara (1990).

9 MacKenna (1991), cxiv n. 17 (Dillon's note on the content of the accusation).

10 Dillon (1996b), 380–3.

A common feature of allegorical interpretation and the Pythagorean tradition is the fact that both see symbols and enigmas as gateways to wisdom.[11] Ancient witnesses frequently associate allegory with Pythagoreanism. For example, Anaximander of Miletus wrote an *Exegesis of the Pythagorean Symbols* (συμβόλων Πυθαγορείων ἐξήγησιν)[12] and a literary critic who was noted for reading Homer's undermeanings;[13] the grammarian Tryphon (1st century C.E.) in his extant work explains enigmas and discusses Pythagorean symbols (*RhGr* 3.193f). He gives examples from Pythagoras, Homer and Hesiod, without distinguishing between Pythagoras and the poets.[14] Although the relationship between Pythagoreanism and literary criticism is not quite clear, it is unsurprising even on the basis of our limited evidence that the Neoplatonists' interests in allegorical interpretation go hand in hand with an interest in Pythagoreanism.

The Platonists follow two modes of their exegetical practices during the first centuries of the Empire. Plato's *Phaedrus* leads them, through the concept of *enthousiasmos*, to establish a relationship between philosophy, on the one hand, and divination, mysteries and poetry, on the other. In the Pythagorean-Platonist context, they are fundamentally comparable, in the sense that the same truth is revealed by the god to poets such as Homer and Hesiod, and to philosophers such as Pythagoras and Plato. However, the truth is conveyed in a coded form that prevents it from becoming publicly known and makes it exclusive to the very few persons who are competent enough to think like gods.[15]

The Neoplatonists also continue the Stoic beliefs that myth is a treasure-house of profound truth and that the language of poetry has the power to reveal truths which cannot be expressed in ordinary speech.[16] Similar to the Stoics, they assume that every word may have a potential to reveal a deep understanding. For the Stoics, one of the ways of understanding the nature of gods is to analyse their names. In this sense, mythology provides the definition of the gods' names in their materialistic system. A Stoic examines the gods, not as the parts or powers of nature, but as the expression of the divine reason (νοῦς) in these parts and powers of nature. Divine names, myths and titles testify to how the ancients perceived nature, while etymology enables the Stoics to rediscover old beliefs. Names are deemed to be the product of nature; that is to say, like Socrates in the *Cratylus,* the Stoics believe that a name-giver forms names reflecting their objects. The Stoics etymologise names to gain the

11 Struck (2004), 102–3.
12 Suda, Alpha 1987.
13 Struck (2004), 103 n. 59.
14 Lamberton (1986), 31–43 for the Pythagoreans' interpretation of Homer.
15 Hermann (2004).
16 Struck (2010), 57–9.

true nature of the objects identified by them.[17] Their focus on etymology is in fact based on their 'adoption of a theory of prephilosophical wisdom,' a theory which is derived from the idea that humankind of the prephilosophical period (*fortunata tempora*, Seneca, *Epistle* 90.36) had a privileged and better insight into the world than we do.[18]

The Stoics emphasise that the purpose of poetry is, not merely to provide psychological relief or to amuse, but to teach. In their opinion, only the wise man is able to become a poet (*SVF* 3.654-655 = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.7.5b12.1-2). They in essence adopt the traditional position with respect to the appreciation of poetry, but do so from a well-examined philosophical perspective. On the basis of the idea that primitive men lived well in the prephilosophical period,[19] the Stoics try to recover the primitive wisdom through the elucidation of myths, which are supposed to carry traces of this wisdom. The originality of myths had been corrupted in time and the Stoics accuse the poets of filling up human life with superstition (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.63), but nevertheless they think that the nature of god may be embedded in myths (*De Natura Deorum 2.71*).

In this context, Cornutus, a Stoic philosopher of the first century C.E., flourishing in the period of Nero, is a significant figure in the history of allegorical interpretation, whom Porphyry mentions as a teacher of the allegorical method of interpreting Greek mysteries in his *Against the Christians* (*Contra Christianos* F 39.30-5 Harnack = Eus., *Hist. Ecc.* 6.19.5-8).[20] Like the early Stoics, Cornutus agrees that there were intellectually superior people, or the earliest philosophers, who had the capability of understanding the true nature of the universe, in the early stage of human history. He thinks that they self-consciously transmitted their philosophy encoded in allegorical form, using the language of symbols and enigmas, and that the poets embellished these allegorical narratives when they took them as the basis of their stories. In his view, the elements of ancient thoughts can be discovered within the poetic tradition by those who would know how to separate these original allegories embedded in myths. In his *Compendium of Greek Theology*, a didactic work, Cornutus provides the necessary material and method for his students, by which they

17 Van den Berg (2008), 33–6 for a discussion of the Stoics' attitude towards etymology.

18 Boys-Stones (2001), 3–27 for a summary of the beginning of the theory starting from Cynics, Plato to Dicaearchus of Messene and a discussion about Seneca, *Epistles* 90.

19 The early Stoics believe that there was no internal force to lead them in their natural state to act badly; on the other hand, Posidonius accepts both the existence of external and internal forces, that is to say that there are rational and irrational forces controlling human inclination, see Boys-Stones (2001), 44–9 for a detailed discussion on this subject.

20 Tate (1929), 41–5; Most (1989), 2014–65; Long (1996), 71–4; Boys-Stones (2001), 49–59; Struck (2004), 143–51 for Cornutus.

will understand the early traditions about gods, their cults, etc., and says that the complete account of these things will lead them to piety, not superstitions (*Compendium* 75.17-76.16).[21] On the basis of the etymological analysis of divine names, starting from Prometheus to Hades, his methodology is to evaluate traditional divinities within the context of all the available sources including popular beliefs, cult practices and epithets, and the visual arts. Cornutus' methodology bears similarity to Porphyry's methodology in *De Antro*, in which he examines symbols and images of Homer within almost all aspects.[22]

The Stoic Crates of Mallos and his pupil, Herodicus of Babylon, are also influential figures in developing the Neoplatonic tradition of allegorical commentary. They are important in raising the status of Homer and Hesiod as divinely-inspired, and thus to the status of theological authorities. Crates and Herodicus strongly influenced the allegorical exegeses of Philo and Proclus, and also Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems*, where their views are reported in a number of Heraclitus' ethical and particularly physical interpretations.[23] Crates, who was active as a philosopher, literary critic, and grammarian of the School of Pergamum in the second century B.C.E.,[24] was the first advocate of fully pervasive metaphysical and cosmological allegory, arguing that Homer's intention was in fact to convey scientific or philosophical truths in the guise of poetry.[25] For example, in his *Rectification of Homer*, Crates claims that Homer's description of Agamemnon's shield in *Iliad* 11.32-37 is a description of the world.[26] In accordance with Heraclitus' report in *Homeric Problem* 27, Crates ventured that when 'Zeus' hurls Hephaistos down from Olympos' (*Il.* 1.590-595), the intention is to measure the universe, since Helios and Hephaistos moved from the same point with the same speed and finished at the same time in the same place (an interpretation which the more restrained Heraclitus dismissed as 'a mere fantasy').[27]

While these and other Stoics specialised in the metaphysical and cosmological interpretation of traditional myths, others considered Homer a pioneer in the fields of history and geography. Strabo (c. 63 B.C.E. – c. 24 C.E.) especially argues that Homer's wisdom and authority extend to geographical subjects

21 On the originality of Cornutus' work, see Boys-Stones (2001), 58 n. 18; Struck (2004), 143 n. 2. See also Boys-Stones (2018), *L. Annaeus Cornutus: Greek Theology, Fragments, and* Testimonia for the translation of all the fragments and testimonies of Cornutus.

22 Struck (2010), 60–1.

23 Dillon (1997), 131.

24 See Wilson (2013), 191–2 for a brief account of Crates' life.

25 Brisson (2004), 47.

26 Eustathius, *ad Il.* 3.144.7-22 van der Valk.

27 Trans. Russell (2005), 52–3.

(*Geographica* 1.1.2).[28] In *De Antro,* Porphyry maintains the fundamental structure of the Stoics' exegetical practices in the sense that he applies astrological allegoresis to the double gates of the Homeric cave, and he geographically proves its existence in Ithaca, as we will see later in this chapter.

Returning to two Neopythagoreans, Cronius and Numenius, they are of particular relevance to *On the Cave of the Nymphs* and its approach. Porphyry seems to adopt a much more positive stance towards Numenius in comparison with his stance towards Cronius. For example, as we will also see later, he criticises Cronius – even if Cronius finished this task in the most competent manner – for his method of interpreting Homer in a passage from his work *On the Styx* (F 372 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.1.32) where Porphyry hints at the principle of Aristarchus of Samothrace (220–143 B.C.E.) and states that we should clarify 'Homer from Homer,' also accepting the idea that Homer deliberately hid exact truths about the gods and *daimones*.[29] As for Numenius, his contribution of the allegorical interpretation of Homer is conveyed through Porphyry's references to him in the treatise. We are better informed on Numenius, partly through Porphyry's own work. Numenius is thought to have lived in Apamea in Syria in the late second century C.E. Unfortunately his works are lost, except for sixty fragments mainly preserved in Eusebius and also in a dozen other authors, pagan and Christian, from Clement of Alexandria (150–215 C.E.) to Johannes Lydus (sixth century C.E.).

In his *On the Good*, Numenius associated Plato's and Pythagoras' doctrines with Indian, Jewish, Persian, and Egyptian wisdom.[30] In *De Antro* 10, Porphyry reports on Numenius linking a line from *Genesis* (1:2) with Egyptian iconography, Heraclitus and Homer to explain the association of the soul's descent into *genesis* with wetness.[31] Numenius' multidirectional approach in this example is quite compatible with Porphyry's 'polythetic' (unity-in-plurality) approach, in the sense that he claims that various religious and cultural traditions can lead us to the divine, and consequently to the salvation of the soul.[32]

Furthermore, Numenius proposed allegorical readings of Plato. For example, he explained the battle between Atlantis and Athens in the *Timaeus* (23d ff.) as the battle of irrational souls, who are under the process of *genesis*,

28 See also Montiglio (2011), 87 for a reference to Strabo's *Geographica* 1.2.4, saying that Homer's wide knowledge the arts of geography, generalship, agriculture and rhetoric is proven by Odysseus.

29 Lamberton (1986), 112–14; Brisson (2004), 83; Struck (2004), 21–2.

30 Numenius, F 1a des Places = F 9a Leemans; Eus., *PE* 9.7.1; see also Brisson (2004), 71–4 and the detailed discussion of Numenius in Lamberton (1986), 54–77.

31 Numenius, F 30 des Places = Test. 46 Leemans; Heraclitus, 22 B 62 and B 77 DK; *Od.* 6.201.

32 Clark (2007), 137; Addey (2014a), 49.

and are the followers of Poseidon or 'water,' and rational or noble souls under the guidance of Athena or 'intellect.'[33] Numenius allegedly also wrote a work called *On Plato's Secrets* (*Περὶ τῶν παρὰ Πλατώνι ἀπορρήτων*), which could have associated Plato with Pythagoras and held that Plato presented his 'true' doctrines only to a small inner circle of followers.[34] Moreover, he seems to have commented on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in order to show agreement between Homer and Plato, notably regarding the journey of the soul after death. To that purpose, he compared the cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey* with the Platonic Cave in the *Republic*.[35] The general meaning of the preserved reports conforms to what is on view in Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, namely the collocation of Plato, Pythagoras, mystery cults and Homer and with the assumption that all are in fundamental agreement.

Numenius is a pivotal figure in the development of the idea that Homer, Pythagoras and Plato all communicated the same fundamental, unchangeable, deeper, 'divine' truth, which could also be found among the Egyptians, the Persians and the Jews, and was accessible only to the initiated, as in the mysteries. All of this indicates that Numenius was a pioneer of mystical allegory, a type of philosophical exegesis which we can trace more clearly in a different manifestation, namely in the development of allegorical exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures in Alexandria in late Hellenistic and early Imperial times. For example, Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.E. – 50 C.E.) in his *On Providence* (2.40-41) associates myths with mysteries, and considers Plato the mouthpiece of Pythagoras.[36]

2 Porphyry and *On the Cave of Nymphs*

In contrast to his master, Plotinus, who did not write any distinct work on poetry, Porphyry actively engaged in literary criticism with Longinus in Athens before he joined the circle of Plotinus in Rome. *On the Cave of the Nymphs* is not Porphyry's first work on the interpretation of Homer. We have also his *Homeric Questions*, composed before he went to Rome. The *Questions* fit into the genre of works that defend Homer against critics. It does not display Neoplatonic philosophical and mystical ideas, but evaluates passages in Homer

33 Numenius, F 37 des Places = Test. 49 Leemans; Procl., *In Tim.* 1.76.30-77.23 Diehl; see Chapter 3, 'Preliminary Remarks on Numenius Fragment 30' for Numenius, F 30 des Places = Test. 46 Leemans and Chapter 3, '*Daimones* and Souls on the Descent into *Genesis*' for a discussion of his commentary on the story of Atlantis in comparison with Porphyry's.

34 Numenius, F 23 des Places = F 30 Leemans; Eus., *PE* 13.4.4-5.2.

35 F 35 des Places = Test. 42 Leemans; Procl., *In Remp.* 2.128.26–130.14 and 2.131.8-14 Kroll.

36 Brisson (2004), 61–3; Lamberton (1986), 44–54.

following the Aristarchan principle: 'clarifying Homer from Homer' (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν).

Porphyry considers the *Questions* (1.22-28) as a preparatory exercise for his prospective task, greater treatises on Homer, which are deferred to a time appropriate to their examination. This announcement may be related to a kind of struggle he engages in *De Antro*,[37] and prompts the question to mind to which period of Porphyry's career we may assign *De Antro*. Lamberton argues that Porphyry's different attitudes towards Homer's texts, his philological interpretation in the *Questions* and the mystical and metaphysical interpretation in *De Antro*, do not show that these two works belong to different periods of his career.[38] And he continues to point out that Porphyry hardly needs Plotinus to be introduced to the teachings of Numenius and Cronius, so he believes that *De Antro* may have been produced at any date between the mid-250s C.E. and Porphyry's death.

I incline to believe that *De Antro* belongs to the period between Porphyry's admission to Plotinus' school in Rome and his death.[39] This suggestion is based on the following reasons: despite Lamberton's remark quoted above, Porphyry seems to have been more intimately involved in the doctrines of Numenius in Rome than in Athens because he was actively read in Plotinus' school, and because of the request of Amelius from Porphyry to read his treatise on a comparison of the doctrines of Plotinus and Numenius. The *Odyssey* is deemed to be a spiritual journey by Plotinus and his circle, as in the case of Numenius and his school. The Delphic oracle revealing the fate of Plotinus' soul after his death and quoted by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 22.13-63) reflects Homeric echoes similar to the theme of *De Antro*.[40] And so its close connection with *De Antro* also supports the idea that the treatise was produced after his joining of the circle of Plotinus.[41]

The connection of *De Antro* with Porphyry's other works in specific subjects, particularly with his mature works such as *De Abstinentia* or the *Sententiae* assigned to the later period of his career, also strengthens the claim, as will be

37 Lamberton (1986), 108–9; Struck (2004), 72 and 159–60; MacPhail (2011), 2.

38 Lamberton (1986), 109–11.

39 Bidez (1964/1913), 32–3; Pfeiffer (1968), 226 likewise argues that it was written after Porphyry's arrival in Plotinus' school in 262 C.E. See also Simonini (2010/1986), 30–1 inclines to think that it was written after Porphyry's encounter with the philosophy of Plotinus, but not fully assimilated; Alt (1998), 487 claims that *De Antro* is an early work of Porphyry; Johnson (2013), 59 n. 23; Simmons (2015), 29.

40 Lamberton (1986), 132–3; Edwards (1988), 509–21 for a detailed discussion of the similarities of the Homeric phrases in the oracle and *De Antro*.

41 Edwards (1988), 515–16.

seen; for example, the metaphor of victorious athletes and the soul liberated from their sufferings in *De Antro* 33.10-13 and in *De Abstinentia* 1.31.13-17;[42] the similarities between the description of Kronos and Poros filled up with honey and nectar in *De Antro* 16.9-10, and the consequences of excessive consumption in *De Abstinentia* 1.46.1-15;[43] the statement that the divinities 'shed their powers,' like semen, ἀποσπερματίζειν in *De Antro* 16.17-18, is explained in *Sententia* 37.36-49, and in both works Porphyry makes references to the *daimones*, Poros and Penia (*Symp.* 203b-c). The treatise, counted among 'the first-fruits of his maturity' by Edwards,[44] is a reflection of his interest in the union of the soul with the body, the interest which Porphyry specially displays in Plotinus' school (*VPlot.* 13). Lastly, Plotinus' and Porphyry's common references to Empedocles and Plato are not a mere coincidence, in that the former refers to Empedocles 31 B 115 DK and 31 B 120 DK of *Purifications* and Plato in *Enneads* 4.8.1.17-23 and 4.8.1.33-34, as the latter juxtaposes both philosophers in *De Antro* 8.[45]

We find evidence for Porphyry's continued interest in poetry in his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot.* 15), where he speaks of composing and presenting a poem entitled 'The Sacred Marriage' in Plotinus' school. Although we do not know the content of Porphyry's poem, it seems a safe assumption that it was a mystical and philosophical work. We also learn from *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot.* 15) that Plotinus identifies Porphyry as a poet, philosopher and hierophant and, as Addey has recently observed, this interestingly corresponds to the three types of divine madness distinguished in *Phaedrus* 244a-245a, namely poetic, prophetic, and initiatory.[46] All in all, it is clear that during his time in Rome, Porphyry developed a philosophical strategy in which myths, rituals, oracles, poetry, and philosophy were complementary tools to attain the truth.

On the question of how Porphyry distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate allegory, his criticism of the Christian allegory in his *Contra Christianos* may give a clue to it, an extant work which is quoted or summarised by his later opponents, mainly preserved in the works of Eusebius and Augustine;

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42 See Chapter 4, 'The Journey through the Intelligible Realm.'

43 See Chapter 3, 'Honey as Symbol of Pleasure: a Trap.'

44 Edwards (1996), 88–100 argues that *De Antro* was produced for the Gnostics and supports the idea by drawing analogies with *Enn.* 2.9 where Plotinus wrote against them between 263–268 C.E.

45 See Chapter 2.2., *Enn.* 4.8 (*On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies*) is among the twenty-one treaties, the earliest ones that Plotinus had already written when Porphyry joined the circle (*VPlot.* 4.22-68).

46 Addey (2014a), 55. The epicletic 'hierophant' is associated with the chief priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries; see Brisson (2004), 81–2.

other siginificant evidence is also found in Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel*, the writings of Didymus the Blind, the *Eclogae* of Stobaeus, etc. According to the longest fragment of *Contra Christianos* preserved by Eusebius,[47] Porphyry criticises the interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, particularly of Origen of Alexandria (c. 185 – c. 254 C.E.), a prominent theologian and biblical scholar of the early Greek Church. Porphyry uses the words 'depravity/wickedness' (μοχθηρία, F 39.11 Harnack) and 'foreign narratives' (ἀθνείοις…μύθοις, F 39.30 Harnack)[48] for the definition of the Jewish Scriptures.[49] As Cook rightly observes, these two uses of the word show Porphyry's connection of the Jewish Scriptures with irrationality (and/or immorality). Porphyry objects to Christian exegetes due to the fact that their interpretations are incoherent (ἀσυγκλώστους)[50] with and inappropriate (ἀναρμόστους)[51] to what has been written, not producing a defence for the Scriptures (F 39.12-13 Harnack).[52] He also rejects the idea that Moses' sayings are enigmas, whereas the divine oracles full of hidden mysteries require a special allegorical interpretation.[53]

47 F 39 Harnack = Eus., *Hist. Ecc.* 6.19.4-8.

48 The definition of the Jewish texts as foreign narratives is also found in *De Abstinentia* 2.45 where Porphyry refers to a body 'weighed down with the alien juices of other creatures or with passions of the soul,' trans. Clark (2000), 74.

49 See Cook (2004), 164 for Porphyry's use of the word depravity/wickedness in *De Abstinentia* (2.22.9 and 3.26.9), which is linked to the irrational activities of the soul because of its descent into the material world, and also describes those who harm others. See also Sellew (1989), 79–100; Cook (2002), 128–33; Cook (2004), 163–7; Cook (2008), 1–27; Johnson (2013), 278–82; Becker (2016), 174–8.

50 See *De Abstinentia* 3.18.7-10: 'We shall not extend concern for justice as far as plants, because they appear to be quite i*ncompatible* with *logos*,' trans. Clark (2000), 90.

51 Porphyry uses the word in his *Quaestionum Homericarum ad Iliadem* 1.399, in which the goddesses, Athena and Hera, and the god Poseidon want to bind Zeus where, according to his physical interpretation, Porphyry says that the poet holds irrationality and disharmony. See also Cook (2008), 9.

52 According to Orig.'s *Cont. Cels.* 4.51, Celsus likewise finds the Jewish and Christian allegories disharmonious with the texts to be explained and more absurd than the texts themselves. See Sellew (1989), 92–8; Cook (2004), 62–4 for a discussion of Celsus' objection to the existence of allegorical meaning in the Old Testament Texts; Cook (2008), 10. See also Berchman (1995), 668 n. 43 for a discussion of Porphyry's use of correspondence theory of truth to discredit the historical truth claims derived from the Bible and his accusation of Origen who used the allegorical interpretation to make the Bible coherent.

53 F 39.14-15 Harnack = Eus., *Hist. Ecc.* 6.19.7-9. See also Cook (2008), 13–14 for a brief discussion of a fragment in *Phil. Orac*. where Porphyry comments that oracular truths are hidden in riddles (F 305 Smith = Eus., *PE* 4.8.2.); in *On the Styx* where Porphyry says, 'all the ancients expressed matters concerning the gods and *daimones* through riddles,' (F 372 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth*. 2.1.32, trans. Lamberton (1986), 113).

In his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 9:10, Didymus defends the use of allegorical interpretation and refers to Porphyry's debate with the Christians over the form of exegesis.[54] Porphyry attempts to show that the Hellenistic culture provides more adequate grounds for understanding texts than Christianity does. For this purpose, in his allegorical interpretation of a text of Homer, he compares Christ and evil, the fundamental opposition employed by the Christian exegetes, with Achilles and Hector respectively, to prove that what the Christians said about Christ and evil can be expressed through referring to the two Homeric heroes. In Porphyry's view, the Christian exegeses lack clarity; especially, he regards the parables as unclear to some people, which do not help in teaching the tenets of Christ.[55]

In *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, allegorical interpretation is used primarily to justify the doctrines of Neoplatonism as opposed to explaining the relevant lines in Homer, which are not in themselves problematic. Porphyry's approach to Homer is based on the idea that texts by 'inspired' authors, regardless of their genre, contain messages about the realm of the intelligible, of superior beings and human souls, but that these messages are often encoded and concealed by the stamp of secrecy in symbols and riddles.[56] The intervention of a specialist, in this case a philosopher, is required to reveal that the text's surface meaning is an indirect expression of a deeper meaning, reserved for those who can recognise and understand it. A deeper meaning is to be suspected, especially where the surface meaning is unclear or otherwise unsatisfactory.[57] The specialist's key to deciphering the riddle is a Pythagorean kind of Platonism of which the basic parameters are the differentiation between the realm of the intelligible and the sensible world; a set of rules that explain the intelligible; and the continuous, cyclical journey of the human soul from embodiment through separation to re-embodiment.

Here, it will be useful to examine two fragments, which seem to conflict with Porphyry's stance on Homer in *De Antro* where he considers him to be an inspired poet and theologian of the highest order: one preserved in Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* (*In Tim*. 1.63.24-64.11 Diehl = F 8 Sodano), the other in his commentary on the *Republic* (*In Remp*. 2.105.23-107.14 Kroll = F 182 Smith).[58] The former shows a dispute between Origen the Neoplatonist and

54 Sellew (1989), 99–100; Cook (2002), 163–5; Becker (2016), 167–73.

55 F 52 and 54 Harnack = Macarius, *Apocriticus* 4.8 and 4.9; Sellew (1989), 92–8; Smith (1989), 29–30; Cook (2002), 139–40.

56 Brisson (2004), 85–6.

57 Struck (2010), 60–2.

58 Wilberding (2011), 123–4 argues the fragment derives from *On What is in Our Power*; Johnson (2013), 187 n. 4 claims that it could come from *On the Styx*.

Porphyry about the question of whether Homer's poetry was sufficient for virtue; the latter involves a refutation of the Epicurean Colotes' criticism of Plato for combining philosophy with fictitious stories, namely myth of Er. These two fragments would be good examples for witnessing Porphyry's critical mind, and varieties of his works in scope and subject which can lead the audience to misinterpret his intention if he/she fails to identify the particular aim of each work, as Smith states.[59]

In the first case, according to Proclus' commentary on *Timaeus* 19d2-e2, Porphyry says that 'Homer is quite capable of dressing their passions in intensity and majesty and lifting their deeds to an imposing magnificence, but he is not able to convey a dispassionate intellective state or the activities of the philosophic life (ἀπάθειαν δὲ νοερὰν καὶ ζωὴν φιλόσοφον).'[60] Although it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion, Porphyry's intention might not be to critise Homer in particular but draw attention to how the soul attains a dispassionate level, a level that only a small group of people, particularly the philosophers, can achieve according to *Sententia* 32, as we will see later.[61] We can find his view on this subject in *De Abstinentia* 2.34 where Porphyry mentions a certain type of sacrifice to the god who rules over all (θεῷ μὲν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν),[62] that is the One, which does not contain anything perceived by senses, neither in burning nor in name. As regards the insufficiency of Homer's poetry for virtue, Porphyry believes that not only the *logos* expressed in speech but also the internal *logos* (λόγος…ὁ κατὰ φωνὴν…ὁ ἔνδον)[63] contaminated by the passion of the soul is not appropriate to the god. The best *logos* to worship the god is intellect; through pure silence with pure thoughts about him; the sacrifice is accomplished in a passionless state of the soul and contemplation of the god (ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ ἄρα τῆς ψυχῆς, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ θεωρίᾳ ἡ θυσία αὕτη τελεῖται).[64]

59 Smith (2007b), 7–13.

60 Trans. Tarrant (2007), 157. Indeed, in his debate about the incapability of poets to praise the city, Socrates does not refer to Homer in particular but to the class of poets; it is Origen the Neoplatonist that attempts to show that in Homer the imitation is sufficient for actions of virtues, as stated above.

61 See Chapter 4, 'The Goddess Athena as symbol of *phronesis*.'

62 See also *De Abstinentia* 1.57.8: 'the god who singly is above all and higher than incorporeal nature,' trans. Clark (2000), 54; *De Abstinentia* 2.49.1: 'the philosopher, priest of the god who rules all,' trans. ibid. 75. See also Johnson (2013), 74; Viltanioti (2017), 67.

63 See also Clark (2000), 152–3 n. 291 for expressive and internal *logos*, cf. *De Abstinentia* 3.3.1.

64 Clark (2000), 153 n. 292 for *apatheia* means that 'the worshipper who aims to be like God must be unaffected by *pathê*, as the gods are.' See also *De Abstinentia* 2.43.11-14 for becoming like God through dispassion; *De Abstinentia* 2.45.19-20 for intellectual sacrifice with pure dispassion in the soul; *Sententia* 7 for the freedom of the soul through dispassion;

In the second case, according to Proclus' report, in his defence of Plato against the Epicurean Colotes, Porphyry says that 'Plato did not oppose every form of story-telling but the form that proceeds through shameful and unlawful images, such as Homer and Hesiod composed.'[65] Porphyry apparently shares Plato's concern about the impressionable young minds with incorrect ideas (*Rep*. 377a-b). This view receives support from his commentary on *Timaeus* 26b2-c3 (F 25 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim*. 1.194.14-195.8 Diehl) where Porphyry explains why children have a better memory.[66] Firstly, the children have a strong 'image-forming faculty,'[67] whereas their reasoning faculty is idler because of the lack of experiences that make it sharp and swift. Secondly, they confound rational life with imagination; lastly, the same things appear greater in their imagination: the more they are impressed by them, the more they sympathise with them. However, afterwards Porphyry hints at a distinction between what is seen and what should be understood, providing various explanations: he quotes Heraclitus' saying, 'nature loves to hide' (22 B 123 DK),[68] and gives the example of *daimones* that reveal divine truths in various forms such as images, analogous figures, and ambiguous language, which imply that allegorical myths are required to be deciphered.

It is now to give a short summary of the treatise to comprehend its structure, including particular passages and concepts to be discussed and how Porphyry evaluates the cave and its elements in Homer's verses:

De Antro 1–4: at the beginning of the treatise Porphyry lists a number of questions to reveal all the obscurities in Homer's poem to be explained, which are firstly posed by Cronius:[69] 'What does Homer hint at by the cave in Ithaca?' 'Which gate is for humans, which gate is for gods?' 'What does Homer mean by the cave with two entrances?' 'Why is the cave sacred to the nymphs?' 'Why is it lovely and dark?' 'Why is it not said simply that the cave is sacred to the nymphs, but the specification "which are called naiads" is added?' 'Why does he use the mixing bowls and amphoras?' 'As no liquid is poured into them, why do bees store up honey in them as in beehives?' 'Why are the high looms

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Sententia 32.55-62 for the aim of the theoretical virtues is to become like God through dispassion.

65 Trans. Wilberding (2011), 135–6.

66 Tarrant (2007), 294 n. 815 for the fragment which extends to 195.8 instead of 194.20 as Sodano accepts; also Dillon (2009), 293.

67 Tarrant (2007), 294 n. 816 for the translation of τὸ φανταστικόν as image-forming faculty instead of 'imagination.'

68 Boys-Stones (2003), 214 n. 42 for the use of this fragment by Neoplatonist commentators in the context of explaining the need for allegorical myth.

69 Lamberton (1986), 123; Brisson (2004), 83–4.

not made out of wood or some other substance, but of stone, like the amphoras and mixing-bowls?' 'Who would believe that goddesses weave sea-purple clothes in a dark cave at stone looms, and who would believe it when he hears someone say that these clothes woven by goddesses are visible and sea-purple?' 'Why does Homer allocate the direction of the North to humans, and the direction of the South to gods, rather than using the East and West for this, since the statues and entrances in almost all temples face the East, and those who enter face the West when they stand in front of the statues to offer prayers and honour the gods?' 'Why is an olive tree added near the cave?'

De Antro 5–9: before explaining the meaning of the elements of the cave, Porphyry shows that the cave itself represents the material world, while his survey includes the Presocratics' and Plato's treatments of the cave in the philosophical tradition and its link with rituals by Greeks and Persians in the religious tradition. The cave appears lovely when perceived by the senses, but the discovery of its darkness by intellect is the initial stage for enlightment of the soul. Here, it is evident that Porphyry has the liberated prisoner in Plato's allegory of the cave in the *Republic* in mind. In contrast to the Platonic cave, he presents the Mithraic cave as a place where the soul is liberated from the material world. Porphyry also identifies Mithras with the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*, as Mithras is not only called the Maker and Father of all, but also the Master of *genesis*.

De Antro 10–19: as regards the meaning of the elements, each of which also supports the idea that the cave is a place where the union of the soul with the body occurs, the naiad nymphs, to whom the cave is dedicated, have different symbolic interpretations: they are water divinities, and souls descending into *genesis*, and *dunameis* as female principles having generative power in the process of body-creation; Homer describes them as weaving garments of sea-purple. The union of the soul with the body is explained through the concept of *pneuma*: the soul is attracted to a corporeal substance and becomes thick, dark and moist during the process of embodiment.

The rest of the elements in the cave are connected either to water divinities or souls. Accordingly, the mixing bowls and amphoras are appropriate to water that comes out of stone, and the high stone looms, a symbol of bones, to the souls descending into *genesis* because stone and water belong to the material world. Homer's image of the naiad nymphs weaving garments of sea-purple on the high stone looms is the description of the body-creation process, as the sea-purple garments are flesh woven from blood. The souls' descent into *genesis* is the pleasure which they experience in the process of embodiment, just as honey, as the product of bees, is a symbol of pleasure. Porphyry draws an analogy between Poros and Kronos, the former getting drunk on nectar in

Plato's *Symposium* 203b5-7 and the latter on honey by Zeus' trap in an Orphic poem. The descent of Kronos into *genesis* signifies the union of the soul with the body, which shows the soul's propensity to passions and pleasure and its loss of intellect. Bees can also be deemed to be the just and sober souls, who are fond of returning to their origin.

De Antro 20–35: for Homer's double-gated cave, the northern entrance allocated to humans, the southern to the immortals, Porphyry offers different astrological exegeses, variously named, such as the gates of Cancer and Capricorn or the solstitial gates associated with the cosmological and astrological representation in a *mithraeum* and tauroctony in the mysteries of Mithras, the gates of the Sun in *Odyssey* 24.12, and the gates of the Sun and the Moon. The gates of the Sun and the Moon might be identified both with the two celestial openings in *Republic* 10 and with Intellect and Life, respectively, in the triad Being-Intellect-Life in Porphyry at the celestial level. The souls descending into *genesis* aren't pure souls anymore, and, for this reason, Homer describes them as humans. After their death, since these souls are separated from their bodies, they can be considered as immortals.

The olive tree situated near the cave signifies Athena, a symbol of practical wisdom, through which Homer hints that cosmos is the product of the god's mind and intelligent nature, not created by chance. Odysseus sitting under the olive tree leaves all his precious goods and clothes in the cave under the guidance of Athena; the hero represents the soul descending into *genesis*, but will return back to its fatherland. Odysseus' long journey is in fact the exile of the soul in the material world, a theme found in Plato (*Polit.* 273d-e),[70] and the soul gets rid of all the toils and passions of the material world when it arrives in a world completely foreign to Matter.

2.1 *On the Cave of the Nymphs*

This section analyses what might have been the aim of Porphyry in writing a sophisticated allegorical interpretation of the specific passage he singled out for his treatise, *Odyssey* 13.102-112, and how he interprets this passage in order to fulfil this aim by showing the prominent features of the text. In analysing the composition of the text, it argues that Porphyry's exegesis follows a deliberate and clearly defined path, guided by interests that also pervade many of his other works, the relationship between the soul and body, and the salvation of the soul. Furthermore, it examines how Porphyry uses the two significant concepts of Neoplatonic allegory, symbol and image, in the treatise.[71] In addition, the

70 Brisson (2004), 85.

71 Dillon (1975/1990), 247/XXVIII.

analysis deals with Porphyry's identification of Homer as theologian, a term used eight times throughout the text, including how Homer and his verses reveal the truth.

Porphyry's *On the Cave of The Nymphs* (*Περὶ τοῦ ἐν Ὀδυσσείᾳ τῶν νυμφῶν ἄντρου* in Greek, *De Antro Nympharum* in Latin) is an elaborate exegesis of a single passage in the *Odyssey*, 13.102-112, in which Homer describes the cave by the harbour of Phorcys in Ithaca where Odysseus is dropped by the Phaeacians and in which, on the instructions of Athena, he stores the Phaeacians' gifts. As we have already seen in the Introduction, Porphyry starts his exegesis with a quotation of Homer's description. Similarly to opening Matryoshka dolls, he unfolds, to his audience, the various layers of meaning of these Homeric images and symbols within a wide range of disciplines, such as history, mythology, etymology, religion, astrology, cosmology and philosophy.[72]

The two central entities in the Homeric passage and context, and in Porphyry's exegesis, are the cave and Odysseus. Starting from Socrates to the Cynics and Stoics, from the Epicurean Philodemus of the first century B.C.E to Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, the Homeric hero seems to be used more than any other mythological character to convey philosophers' moral thoughts.[73] Among them Antisthenes (c. 445 – c. 360 B.C.E.), who is considered the founder of the Cynic movement (D.L., 1.15 and 6.1) and one of the most devoted followers of Socrates, is known for his approval of Odysseus' character and actions.[74] According to Porphyry's testimony in his *Homeric Questions*, Antisthenes endorsed the virtue of Odysseus because of his ability to deal with various troubles through his knowledge and reasoning (here, the hero is skeptical about Calypso's promise of immortality, and her divine status).[75] Antisthenes laid emphasis on

72 Smith (2007b), 13 for his description of Porphyry's style of thinking in *De Antro* as 'paratactic,' saying, 'Porphyry places a number of widely differing allegorical interpretations after each other and leaves the reader to make his own choices.'

73 On the history of the philosophical reading of Odysseus see Silvia Montiglio (2011), *From Villain to Hero: Odysseus in Ancient Thought*.

74 Antisthenes' strong interest in Odysseus is found in several titles of his lost works such as *Odysseus or about Odysseus*, *On the Scout*, *On the Odyssey*, *On the Wand*, *On Helen and Penelope*, *The Cyclops or on Odysseus, The Use of Wine or Drunkenness or the Cyclops*, *On Circe*, *On Odysseus and Penelope and on the Dog* (D.L., 6.15 and 6.17–18). See Brisson (2004), 37–8; Montiglio (2011), Chapter 1 for the full discussion of Antisthenes' defense of Odysseus. Particularly, see Scholia at *Od.* 1.1 and *Il.* 9.305, attributed to Porphyry (*SSR* II V A 187 = *Quaestionum Homericarum ad Odysseam Pertinentium Reliquiae* 1.1.1-36) where Antisthenes defended Odysseus' *polytropic* character as his knowledge of conversing with people in many ways, Prince (2015), 591–622 for a translation and discussion of the testimony.

75 Scholia at *Od.* 23.337, 5.211, 7.257, and 9.33, attributed to Porphyry (*SSR* II V A 188 = *Quaestionum Homericarum ad Odysseam Pertinentium Reliquiae* 7.258); see Montiglio (2011), 34–6; Prince (2015), 622–31 for a translation and discussion of the testimony.

Odysseus' rejection of Calypso/bodily beauty/immortality acquired without labour and hardship in favour of Penelope/deep thoughtfulness/immortality of the wise acquired by labour and hardship. This passage might sow the seeds of Porphyry's interpretation of Odysseus as the soul striving to return from the material realm to the fatherland, namely the realm of the intelligible, in *De Antro*.[76] As Montiglio observes,[77] in Antisthenes' view Odysseus' preference for Penelope seems to derive from his 'philosophical' longing for an intelligent woman, not from homesickness.[78]

These two central entities appear especially in the myths of Plato's *Republic*. The Allegory of the Cave is one of the main subjects of *Republic* 7, where the cave appears as an image and symbol of the world of 'everyday' consciousness, and Porphyry assigns the same significance to Homer's cave in *De Antro*. Odysseus, the protagonist of the *Odyssey* at large and of the passage Porphyry has selected for exegesis, appears in the myth of Er in *Republic* 10 as an example of the 'experienced soul' choosing to lead a secluded life free from all toils endured in his previous life. In *De Antro* 34, where Porphyry analyses Homer's image of Odysseus and the goddess Athena sitting under the olive tree near the cave of the nymphs, Porphyry deems Odysseus to be the soul on the verge of ascending to the intelligible realm after undergoing laborious stages of *genesis*. The Platonic myth and Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of Homer's Odysseus depict the hero as striving to do away with all materialistic possessions, the one difference between the two texts being that the Platonic Odysseus is

76 *SSR* II V A 99 = D.L., 6.105.7-10 for Antisthenes' belief that virtue is teachable and could not be lost once acquired, see Prince (2015), 332–3 for the testimony; Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 8.21 where he mentions difficulties in battling against pleasure and refers to Odysseus' rejection of pleasure while his comrades drugged by Circe; also *Orationes* 9.8-9 for his comparison of Diogenes the Cynic with Odysseus; Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 15.9 and 34.9 for his linking of Odysseus with Diogenes; Montiglio (2011), Chapter 3 for the Cynics' and Stoics' evaluations of Odysseus.

77 Montiglio (2011), 36.

78 Aristippus of Cyrene, *SSR* 4a.107 = D.L., 2.8 for a comparison those whose education does not include a course of philosophy with Penelope's suitors; this comparison is also attributed to Ariston of Chios (*SVF* 1.349). Eustathius of Thessalonica, a Greek scholar and bishop of the twelfth century C.E., interprets Odysseus' abandonment of Calypso as the wise man leaving the study of astronomy and astrology for philosophy identified with Penelope (*Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 1.17.38-43 Stallbaum), see also F. Buffière (1956), 388–91 for this interpretation.

In addition, Heraclitus' attribution of *phronesis* to Odysseus in *Homeric Problems* 70.8: 'His wisdom descends to Hades, so that nothing even of what lies below us goes unexplored,' and *Homeric Problems* 72.3: 'Odysseus's wisdom prevailed over the luxury of Circe's dwelling,' trans. Russell (2005), 112–3 and 114–7.

in the process of descending into *genesis*, and the Porphyrian in the process of ascending to the intelligible realm.

These similarities suggest that Porphyry may have written *De Antro* as a complementary or preliminary allegorical exegesis to his commentary on the myth of Er, in which, according to Proclus, he showed himself 'a perfect interpreter in particular of all the hidden material in the myth' (F 181 Smith = *In Remp*. 2.96.5-6 Kroll). Even if this is not the case, it is nonetheless obvious that there are strong connections between the commentary on the myth of Er and *De Antro*. In the latter, Porphyry draws an analogy between the two gates of Homer's cave and the two entrances in Plato's myth within the context of an analysis of the gates of heaven (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). Thus, it would not be wrong to say that Porphyry in *De Antro* has the same ethical concerns as Plato in the myth of Er. In a part of his commentary on the myth of Er which is preserved in Proclus' commentary on the *Republic*, Porphyry's emphasis on 'being just' suggests that he deems the aim of the myth of Er to be ethical, which means that the soul's choices in this life and the afterlife represent the deciding factor in its descent into *genesis* (F 182 Smith = *In Remp*. 2.106.23-2.107.5 Kroll):[79]

> καὶ ὅτι Πλάτων οὐ πᾶσαν ἐκποδὼν ἐποίησεν μυθολογίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ τῶν αἰσχρῶν καὶ ἀθέσμων πλασμάτων χωροῦσαν, οἵαν Ὅμηρός τε καὶ Ἡσίοδος ἐγραψάτην, καὶ οὐδὲ τὰ δείματα ταῦτα <τὰ> ἐν Αιδου γυμνὰ τέθεικεν, τὰς ψυχὰς δεδιττόμενος καὶ πρὸς θάνατον περιφόβους ἀποτελῶν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀδίκοις αὐτὰ προτείνων πρὸς τὴν ἀδικίαν ἀπεργάζεται τοὺς ἀκούοντας εὐλαβεῖς, μονονουχὶ συνημμένον πλέκων 'εἰ τὸ ἀδικεῖν ὑμῖν αἱρετόν, τὰ φρικωδέστατα τῶν κολαστηρίων ὑμῖν ἐστιν αἱρετά· ταῦτα δὲ φεύγετε παντὶ σθένει· φευκτέον ἄρα ὑμῖν καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν'·
>
> And note that Plato did not oppose every form of story-telling but the form that proceeds through shameful and unlawful images, such as Homer and Hesiod composed. Nor does (Plato) frighten the souls and render them fearful of death by setting up these objects of fear in Hades without provisions. Rather, by presenting these (events) to the unjust, (Plato) makes his listeners hesitant to commit injustice, and he all but draws the conclusion: 'if being unjust is choice-worthy for you, then the most horrible places of punishment are choice-worthy for you. But you flee these with all your might; therefore, you must also flee injustice.'

79 Trans. Wilberding (2011), 135–6.

Not only in his interpretation of the myth of Er but also in his other interpretations, as we will see, Porphyry tends to give priority to ethical concerns about the soul, a tendency which is also criticised by Proclus in his commentary on the story of Atlantis (F 13 Sodano = *In Tim*. 1.116.26-117.8 Diehl).[80] In *De Antro*, Porphyry demonstrates towards the end of the text, particularly in *De Antro* 34 to 36, that his ultimate aim in this treatise has also been an ethical concern about the soul, symbolised by Odysseus and the liberated prisoner in *Republic* 7, both of whom escape from all the toils of the material world.

As regards scholarship on *De Antro*, Dillon affirms the close connection of the exegesis of the cave of the nymphs and the myth of Er through Numenius.[81] Edwards also considers the *Odyssey* and the myth of Er as the proof texts for Porphyry's account of the ascent and descent of souls.[82] He also argues that Porphyry's aim of writing *De Antro* is to attack the Gnostics, seeing as he titled *Ennead* 2.9 '*Against the Gnostics*' (or '*Against those Declaring the Creator of the World, and the World itself, to be evil*'), but even if this is not the case, a handbook for interpreters. Edwards' emphasis on the view that the grasp of truth is not a sudden but a gradual process from the lowest to the highest grades of virtue through the text is compatible with the association of the Odyssean spiritual journey and the soul turning the eyes upwards through dialectic (*Rep*. 533d). Porphyry reveals this process by showing how to read the treatise and to interpret Homer's symbols and images. The attainment of higher truths is represented by the image of 'Odysseus and the goddess Athena sitting under the olive tree near the cave' in *De Antro* 34. With emphasis on Porphyry's ethical concerns, Edwards says, 'Porphyry implies that moral progress is required to achieve the insight represented by the olive, for the suppliant must make his peace with the gods of the sea before he wins the favour of Athena.'[83] His remark agrees with my suggestion that Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with *phronesis* is a reference to the cathartic virtues in *Sententia* 32, one of the four stages of Porphyry's doctrine of virtues, which gradually lead the soul to arrive at human excellence through distinct mental endeavours.[84]

Porphyry bases his exegesis in *De Antro* on Numenius' identification of Homer's cave as an image of the cosmos (*De Antro* 6.16, 8.18-19, 12.21-22, 21.1-2, and 32.22-23) and of Odysseus as an image (εἰκών) of the soul passing through

80 See Chapter 3, '*Daimones* and Souls on the Descent into *Genesis*.'

81 Dillon (1996b), 375–6; see also Lamberton (1986), 130 for Porphyry's enhancement of Numenius' interpretation of Odysseus' spiritual journey.

82 Edwards (1996), 88–100.

83 Ibid., 99.

84 See Chapter 4, 'The Goddess Athena as symbol of *phronesis*' for a detailed discussion for Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with *phronesis*.

successive stages of *genesis* and returning to the place where it is free from all the toils and passions of the material world (*De Antro* 34.13-16 and 35.4-7). Numenius' exegesis seems tailor-made for Porphyry, as it provided him with an opportunity to reconcile Homer and Plato through the concept of the cave. More importantly, perhaps, it provided an opportunity to use Homer's verses to satisfy his particular interest in how the soul is associated with the body, an interest which also emerges from his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot* 13).

Not only Numenius, but also Plotinus in *Ennead* 1.6.8 interprets the journey of Odysseus,[85] who flees from the pleasures offered by Circe and Calypso and eventually reaches his homeland, symbolising the successful journey of the human soul to return to the 'fatherland' that is the realm of the intelligible, while contrasting him with Narcissus, who loses himself in his own reflection in the water and 'drowns in material beauty.' We also find in Maximus of Tyre, a Platonist of the second century C.E., an image of Odysseus as a model of the useful life and complete virtue; according to Maximus, it is virtue (ἀρητή) that makes the hero divine and like the immortals as Plato deems the happy man to be (τοῦτο ἄνδρα ποιεῖ διογενῆ καὶ θεοῖς εἴκελον, οἷον ἀξιοῖ Πλάτων εἶναι τὸν εὐδαίμονα).[86]

In following Numenius' treatment of Odysseus, Porphyry's text was, therefore, clearly not idiosyncratic but followed a path that was, to some extent, familiar to his Neoplatonic audience and carried the seal of approval of the master. This is corroborated by Porphyry's reference to another Odyssean image in his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 22.27), of the hero eagerly swimming to the coast of the Phaeacians (νήχε' ἐπειγόμενος, *Od*. 5.399):[87]

> δαῖμον, ἄνερ τὸ πάροιθεν, ἀτὰρ νῦν δαίμονος αἴσῃ
> θειοτέρῃ πελάων, ὅτ' ἐλύσαο δεσμὸν ἀνάγκης
> ἀνδρομέης, ῥεθέων δὲ πολυφλοίσβοιο κυδοιμοῦ
> ῥωσάμενος πραπίδεσσιν ἐς ᾐόνα νηχύτου ἀκτῆς
> νήχε' ἐπειγόμενος δήμου ἄπο νόσφιν ἁλιτρῶν
> στηρίξαι καθαρῆς ψυχῆς εὐκαμπέα οἶμην,
> ἧχι θεοῖο σέλας περιλάμπεται, ἧχι θέμιστες
> ἐν καθαρῷ ἀπάτερθεν ἁλιτροσύνης ἀθεμίστου.
> Καὶ τότε μὲν σκαίροντι πικρὸν κῦμ' ἐξυπαλύξαι

85 Lamberton (1986), 132–3; Edwards (1988), 509–10.

86 Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 26.7.11-14 and 26.9.27-36; F. Buffière (1956), 386–8; M.B. Trapp (1997), 219 and 222; Montiglio (2011), 77–84 for the Stoics' interpretation of Odysseus.

87 Trans. Armstrong (1995), 66–7. I am grateful to Prof. J. M. Dillon for drawing my attention to this passage.

> αἱμοβότου βιότοιο καὶ ἀσηρῶν εἰλίγγων
> ἐν μεσάτοισι κλύδωνος ἀνωίστου τε κυδοιμοῦ
> πολλάκις ἐκ μακάρων φάνθη σκοπὸς ἐγγύθι ναίων.
>
> Spirit, man once, but now nearing the diviner lot of a spirit, as the bond of human necessity has been loosed for you, and strong in heart, you swam swiftly from the roaring surge of the body to that coast where the stream flows strong, far apart from the crowd of the wicked there to set your steps firm in the easy path of the pure soul, where the splendour of God shines round you and the divine law abides in purity far from lawless wickedness. Then too, when you were struggling to escape from the bitter wave of blood-feeding life, from its sickening whirlpools in the midst of its billows and sudden surges, often the Blessed Ones showed you the goal ever near.

The above passage (*VPlot*. 22.23-34), as part of a lengthy Delphic oracle, reports on an enquiry by Amelius, who consulted the oracle of Apollo in Delphi, wondering where Plotinus' soul had gone. In revealing the fate of Plotinus' soul to him, the oracle borrowed Homeric phrases relating to Odysseus, pronouncing enigmatically that Plotinus had managed to 'escape from the bitter wave of blood-feeding life' (πικρὸν κῦμ' ἐξυπαλύξαι αἱμοβότου βιότοιο, *VPlot*. 22.31-32; cf. *VPlot*. 23.6), that is to say, from life entrapped in the body, just like Porphyry's interpretation of Odysseus in *De Antro*, and his soul escaping from all toils of the material world.

One of the prominent features of Porphyry's allegorical interpretation is the appreciation of the ancients and ancient wisdom.[88] This is particularly the key feature in Cornutus' work before Porphyry (see also above).[89] In order to reconstruct the insights of the earliest philosophers and the ultimate origin of Greek theology, Cornutus recovers the source material of the myths within the Greek tradition. He also compares different theological systems through identifying their shared sources, and showing similarities and differences between them.[90] For example, in *Compendium* 6.11-19, he says that the Syrian goddess Atargatis' counterpart is the Greek Rhea, also known as Phrygian because of

88 Porphyry refers to the ancients seven times; ancient wisdom twice: οἱ παλαιοί: 4.6, 4.21, 5.1, 14.16, 18.3, 18.7, and 31.10; ἡ παλαιά σοφία: 4.25 and 36.2.

89 Cornutus refers to the ancients eighteen times; for οἱ ἀρχαῖοι: 2.18, 4.9, 23.16, 31.14, 35.10, and 50.16; for οἱ παλαιοί: 16.14, 17.6, 21.13, 26.8, 30.8, 36.7, 52.7, 54.2, 63.5, 64.10, 75.6, and 76.3.

90 Boys-Stones (2003), 196–216.

being worshipped by the Phrygians.[91] In his attempt to uncover the primeval insight of the crop season – also to explain the importance of Eleusis, a place where barley seeds were first found, and the reason why Demeter is called Eleusinian from the fact that human life started there – he links the myth of Demeter and the abduction of her daughter Kore with the myths of Isis and Osiris among the Egyptians, and Adonis among the Phoenicians (*Compendium* 54.8-21). After detecting the shared elements in these myths, Cornutus concludes that the grief of the goddess and her search all over the cosmos were an addition to the original myth as a result of later development since the Egyptians (the grief of Isis and her search of Osiris) and the Phoenicians (the death of Adonis) have similar narrative structures. Cornutus introduces 'mythic truth,' as Struck points out that the equation of 'ancient' with true was not an innovative idea among Greeks, but that the reconstruction of primeval myth, which existed before the age of Homer and Hesiod as a favoured tool for these truths was innovative.[92]

Likewise, Numenius regards theology as a comparative study that is present in Pythagoras and Plato (see also above). As he believes that Plato is the nearest witness to a truth previously revealed by Pythagoras,[93] he also draws on a vast amount of Greek and non-Greek literature, including the doctrines of Brahmans, Jews, Magi and Egyptians in order to support the truth of Pythagoras' doctrine.[94] Numenius' interest in associating different teachings with each other can be observed in *De Antro* 10.11-11.1 in the fact that he links a line from *Genesis* (1:2) with Egyptian iconography, and quoted Heraclitus and Homer to explain the descent of the soul into *genesis* in connection with wetness.

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91 See also *Compendium* 26.7-11 where he mentions the many and varied myths composed by the ancient Greeks just as others by the Magi, by the Phrygians, by the Egyptians and the Celts and the Libyans, and the other nations.

92 *Compendium* 27.19–28.2 where Cornutus hints at the possibility of the fact that the poets (Hesiod in this case) can corrupt the myths, but we should not reject them; *Compendium* 17.12-17 where Cornutus refers to Hesiod and notes that there might be a more perfect interpretation of genelogies than Hesiod's; *Compendium* 34.12-15 where the myth of Hephaestus' binding of Ares and Aphrodite, which is handed down through Homer, is the most ancient; Struck (2004), 149–51; see also Tate (1929), 43–4 for a claim that Cornutus is 'Aristotelian to believe that the myths of the poets contain an element of philosophic truth which they inherited from an earlier age,' cf. Struck (2004), 150 n. 19.

93 See F 24.19-20, F 24.57, and F 24.74-75 des Places (= F 1 Leemans) for his views on Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates; see also Edwards (2010), 115–6.

94 F 1a des Places = F 9a Leemans; Lamberton (1986), 59–73; Boys-Stones (2003), 204 n. 23; Johnson (2013), 189–90.

Porphyry also shares the appreciation of ancient wisdom with his Neoplatonic colleagues in general and, in particular, with Plotinus. In *Ennead* 5.1.8.10-14, Plotinus explicitly states that his doctrine is not a novelty of his time but an exegesis of Plato's dialogues that contain ancient views:[95]

> Καὶ εἶναι τοὺς λόγους τούσδε μὴ καινοὺς μηδὲ νῦν, ἀλλὰ πάλαι μὲν εἰρῆσθαι μὴ ἀναπεπταμένως, τοὺς δὲ νῦν λόγους ἐξηγητὰς ἐκείνων γεγονέναι μαρτυρίοις πιστωσαμένους τὰς δόξας ταύτας παλαιὰς εἶναι τοῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πλάτωνος γράμμασιν.
>
> These teachings are, therefore, no novelties, no inventions of today, but long since stated, if not stressed; our doctrine here is the explanation of an earlier and can show the antiquity of these opinions on the testimony of Plato himself.

Although Plotinus' emphasis here is on Plato, his 'decipherment' of ancient texts extends well beyond the exegesis of Platonic dialogues, which, although they are the final authority for Neoplatonic metaphysical and cosmological doctrines, are deemed to be repositories and conduits of ancient wisdom.

Other Neoplatonists followed the same principle, prioritising Plato but, at the same time, embracing other sources of wisdom as different expressions of the same fundamental truth. For instance, in his *Commentary on Timaeus* (*In Tim*. 2.246.4-7 Diehl), Proclus defends his own appropriation, in addition to Platonism, of Pythagoreanism and the theologians, particularly the Orphics, along these lines,[96] explaining that the Pythagoreans use symbols, Plato mathematical language and the theologians myths, but that this is merely a matter of approach and not of essence. In a similar way, Proclus claims, in his *Platonic Theology* (*PT* 1.25.26-26.4), that the origin of Greek theology is Orphic mystagogy; that Pythagoras was the first to be initiated in these mysteries; and that through the doctrines of the Pythagoreans and Orphics, perfect knowledge about the gods was passed on to Plato. Many more testimonies of this sort could be cited, for Proclus and for others, all confirming that Neoplatonists felt strongly about the ultimate unity of wisdom and fundamental compatibility of Neoplatonic doctrine with earlier wisdom texts – including the Homeric epics.

Another preliminary question which requires discussion with regard to *De Antro* is how Porphyry uses the two significant terms of Neoplatonic allegorical

95 Trans. MacKenna (1991), 357.
96 Rappe (2000), 117–18.

interpretation, symbol (σύμβολον) and image (εἰκών), in his discussion of Homer's cave. A helpful introduction to Neoplatonic/Neopythagorean methodologies in, and approaches to, allegoresis is provided by a passage in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (*In Tim.* 1.29.31-30.18 Diehl). Here, he discusses differences in Porphyry's and Iamblichus' approaches to the context of Socrates' recapitulation of the *Republic* at the beginning of the *Timaeus* (*Tim.* 17b-c). As Porphyry sees the recapitulation from an ethical perspective, Iamblichus draws a parallel between the Pythagoreans' teaching method and Plato's composition of the dialogue.[97]

As Dillon states,[98] it was Iamblichus who systematised the Neoplatonic theory of allegory based upon the Pythagoreans' examination of subjects through symbol and image, taking his cue from Neopythagorean authors such as Numenius, Nicomachus of Gerasa, or Apollonius of Tyana. According to this passage, the Pythagoreans use an image to show a natural reality perceived by the senses, whereas a symbol is a sign of an abstract principle, which can be comprehended by the mind. A symbol requires a higher level of education to be understood and conveys concealed truths.

Porphyry's usages of symbol and image in his exegesis of the Homeric cave with its elements in *De Antro* may be linked to the Pythagoreans' use of these notions in their pedagogy. Throughout the text, Porphyry uses the term 'image' eight times. In six instances, it refers to the cave as an 'image of the cosmos': with reference to the Mithraic cave in *De Antro* 6.13; to the Platonic cave of *Republic* 7 in *De Antro* 8.19 (twice); and with reference to the Homeric cave in *De Antro* 12.8-9, 21.3, and 32.10-11. In addition, he considers Odysseus an 'image' of the soul passing through the different stages of *genesis* in *De Antro* 34.7-10. Porphyry's final instance refers to his own statement in *De Antro* 36.4-5 that Homer hints at the divine images. The term 'symbol' is considerably more frequent, occurring, in total, twenty-six times to refer to either the cave or all the mystical elements in the Homeric cave such as Naiad nymphs, mixing bowls and amphoras, high stone looms, honey, bees, the gates of the cave, and the olive tree at the head of the harbour.

At first glance, there does not seem to be a precise rationale behind Porphyry's use of 'symbol' and 'image' in *De Antro*, as there was in the Pythagoreans' pedagogy. On closer inspection, however, it emerges that Porphyry, like the Pythagoreans, chooses to use 'image' when he is talking about a natural reality – the cave as a physical entity, which is grasped by the senses. For example, in *De Antro* 4.8-17, he even refers to Artemidorus of Ephesus in order to prove the

97 See Dillon (1975/1990), 248–9/XXVIII for the translation of the passage.

98 Dillon (1975/1990), 249–50/XXVIII; see also Rappe (2000), 12–14; Tarrant (2006), 124 n. 156.

geographical existence of the cave dedicated to Naiad nymphs in Ithaca. The reason for Porphyry's use of 'image' for Odysseus is that, as can clearly be seen from an ethical perspective, the Homeric hero is a good example of the soul dealing with painful experiences of the material world, just like Plotinus, as described in the above Delphic oracle in *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot.* 22).

When Porphyry uses 'symbol' for Homer's cave, he might have in mind, not only the cave as a natural reality, but also the cave with its mystical elements, which are grasped by the mind. The mystical elements of the cave function as its complementary factors, so that it is those elements that make the conception of the cave an abstract and mysterious reality, and apart from physical reality. In *De Antro* 32.8, Porphyry uses the phrase 'the cave's riddle' (αὐτοῦ τὸ αἴνιγμα) in order to imply that all the elements in the cave with the olive tree provide the mysteriousness of the cave, which requires to be deciphered like an oracle.

An image provided by Dillon neatly illustrates the Neoplatonic (and Neopythagorean) conception of the difference between image and symbol: the statue of Sir Winston Churchill with his cigar.[99] The statue of Churchill is an image, which is a physical object and a one-to-one replica of Churchill, and we may apply the relationship between Churchill and the statue of Churchill to the relationship between the cosmos and the cave, a one-to-one replica of the cosmos in the mysteries of Mithras or in Plato's *Republic* 7. On the other hand, his cigar is a symbol that functions as an intermediary. The cigar reminds us of Churchill, itself having its own identity. Likewise, all the elements in the Homeric cave are symbols: intermediaries and complementary parts of the cave. They remind us of the cave, but at the same time each element can also be interpreted independently according to various cultural and religious traditions, as Porphyry does throughout the text. The same process of deduction can be applied to Odysseus, since not only the mystical elements of the cave are reminiscent of the hero, but also the Homeric cave, the olive tree and the goddess Athena are ways through which Porphyry depicts Odysseus in the treatise.

As previously stated, following the Neoplatonic tradition, Porphyry has recourse to the knowledge and wisdom of the ancients in order to explain the cave and its elements by referring to a plethora of sources, not all explicitly identified. Porphyry draws on Orphic poems, the mysteries of Mithras and the Eleusinian Mysteries, and Presocratics such as Empedocles, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Pherekydes of Syros, as well as, of course, Plato, and the Neopythagoreans Numenius and Cronius. Porphyry generally composes his treatment of each of his selected topics in such a way that the discussion

99 Dillon (1975/1990), 250/XXVIII.

begins with explicit or implicit references, in a brief statement or relatively detailed account, to either the ancients or the Presocratics or mystery cults and so on, and ends by referring to one of the dialogues of Plato.

When discussing the subject of the cave as an image of the cosmos (*De Antro* 5–9), Porphyry begins with 'the ancients' (οἱ παλαιοί) who dedicated caves to the cosmos. He then proceeds to cite the *mithraeum* of the mysteries of Mithras, a replica of the Universe (*De Antro* 6.8-18); temples, altars, shrines dedicated to the divinities of Greek religion (*De Antro* 6.18-23); a hymn to Apollo referring to caves dedicated to the nymphs (*De Antro* 8.1-10); and a quotation from Empedocles (*De Antro* 8.11-14 = 31 B 120 DK). Porphyry ends this discussion with Plato's Allegory of the Cave in *Republic* 7 (*De Antro* 8.15-22). In addition, Mithras is equated, as the Master of *genesis* and 'Maker and Father of the Universe,' with Plato's demiurge (*De Antro* 6.14; *Tim.* 28c). The discussion now proceeds from non-textual sources via 'traditional' poetry and the Presocratics to Plato.

Elsewhere in *De Antro,* Porphyry begins his analysis of the honey stored in the mixing bowls and amphoras with the question of why the amphoras are filled with honeycombs but not water (*De Antro* 15.1-2). With reference to the theologians, the extended analysis covers many traditional features of honey, such as that it is the food of the gods as primeval nourishment, and its cathartic and preservative powers. In *De Antro* 16.8-15, Porphyry then quotes an Orphic poem (*OF* 154 Kern), showing the seductive and intoxicating powers of honey, like wine, and comparing Kronos inebriated with honey and Poros filled with nectar in Plato's *Symposium* (*Symp*. 203b5-7). Honey's protective and purifying attributes lead Porphyry to discuss its use of the mysteries of Mithras, in which initiates use honey to purify their hands from all that is painful, harmful and loathsome, and their tongues from saying bad things. The mixing bowls, Porphyry explains, symbolise springs just like the mixing bowl which is placed next to Mithras (*De Antro* 17.7), but a mixing bowl is also the place where Plato's Soul of the Universe is blended and mixed in *Timaeus* 41d. Here, it should be said that Porphyry does not in fact make an explicit reference to the mixing bowls of the *Timaeus*; however, given his use of the *Timaeus* earlier in *De Antro* and its general relevance to the topic, there can be little doubt that he had the dialogue in mind and expected the same from his audience. This is confirmed when he, belatedly, makes the association with Plato's mixing bowls more explicitly in *De Antro* 31.4-5.

In his detailed analysis of the meaning of the two gates of the cave, Porphyry firstly quotes Numenius and Cronius (*De Antro* 21–24), referring to the different astrological meanings of the gates. He then discusses the gates of the Sun

in *Odyssey* 24.12, the gates of the Sun and the Moon associated with the two entrances of the myth of Er in *Republic* 615d5 and 615e2, the solstitial gates associated with the astrological significance of the *mithraeum* and tauroctony in the mysteries of Mithras, Parmenides' two gates in his *Physics* (28 B 1 and B 11 DK), and the Pythagoreans' Milky Way, and the Roman festival of Saturnalia, which was celebrated when the Sun is in Capricorn, with the ascent of the soul through the southern gate of the cave. As can be seen, Porphyry's detailed discussion ostensibly makes this part somewhat convoluted, but the underlying reason for this elaborate and extended discussion is his particular concern to show the different ways of salvation of the soul and, ultimately, to associate all those cosmological and astrological interpretations of the gates with the myth of Er in *Republic* 10. In his conclusion to this part of the treatise, Porphyry implies that Plato's knowledge has its source in the wisdom of the ancestors, illustrating this by saying that Plato knows of mixing bowls (*Tim.* 41d) and speaks of wine jars (*Gorg*. 493d-494a), instead of amphoras, and two entrances, instead of two gates (*Rep.* 614c-d and 615d-e).

Porphyry no longer continues to refer to Plato towards the end of the text; instead, *De Antro* 34–5 are full of references to Homer, which are related to images from the *Odyssey*. The last passage, in which Porphyry mentions Homer's wisdom, along with the wisdom of antiquity, is of great importance, because he confirms that such allegorical exegeses are based on the assumption that the poet could speak of higher truths through divine images even if the subject seems to be a fairy-tale:

> (36.8-13) Οὐ δεῖ δὲ τὰς τοιαύτας ἐξηγήσεις βεβιασμένας ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ εὑρεσιλογούντων πιθανότητας, λογιζόμενον δὲ τὴν παλαιὰν σοφίαν καὶ τὴν Ὁμήρου ὅση τις φρόνησις γέγονε καὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς ἀκρίβειαν μὴ ἀπογινώσκειν ὡς ἐν μυθαρίου πλάσματι εἰκόνας τῶν θειοτέρων ᾐνίσσετο. οὐ γὰρ ἐνῆν ἐπιτυχῶς πλάσσειν ὅλην ὑπόθεσιν μὴ ἀπό τινων ἀληθῶν μεταποιοῦντα τὸ πλάσμα.
>
> (36.8-13) One should not think that these types of exegeses are forced, nor a case of concocting ingenious arguments to invent persuasiveness. If one takes into consideration the ancient wisdom and the wisdom of Homer, how his great *phronesis* was the product of precision of every virtue, one should not reject the idea that he hinted at images through the medium of the concoction of a myth. For it would not be possible to successfully compose an entire subject-matter without modelling one's fiction on some truths.

In connection with Homer's wisdom in this passage, in *De Antro* 32.13, Porphyry calls the poet *theologos*,[100] a term which is generally employed to allude to Orpheus. In spite of not using exactly the same word, Herodotus, for instance, believes that Homer and Hesiod were the creators and sources of Greek religion (*Historiae* 2.53-54). The term *theologos* refers to poets, especially Orphic and mantic poets and possibly Hesiod, and their interpreters from the fifth century B.C.E. onwards.[101] In *De Antro*, Porphyry employs the term eight times; six of them are in the plural and are generally allusions to the poetic, religious and philosophical tradition. The term is once used for Orpheus (*De Antro* 16.16) and applied to Homer (*De Antro* 32.13). Porphyry's reference to Homer as *theologos* seems to be quite influential on later Neoplatonists, particularly on Proclus, as they include Homer in the group of theologians with Orpheus, the Orphics, Hesiod and Plato, and value him as a privileged sage.

The opening passage of Porphyry's *On Images*, as quoted below (F 351.15-24 Smith = Eus., *PE* 3.7.1.2-8), is particularly significant in understanding how Porphyry defines the concept of *theologos*. It also provides evidence that a reading of an image, a text, or an oracle, according to Porphyry, functions in the same way as they are all intermediaries conveying higher truths originated from gods.[102] However, what matters to Porphyry is to know how to read the invisible embedded within the visible. In order to reveal these concealed truths, Porphyry undertakes the task of explaining the true meanings of images and symbols, and considers himself qualified to understand them, just as in *De Antro* 4.5-7, in which he discusses how he tries to explain Homer's verses:

> σοφίας θεολόγου νοήματα δεικνύς, οἷς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς δυνάμεις διὰ εἰκόνων συμφύλων αἰσθήσει ἐμήνυσαν ἄνδρες τὰ ἀφανῆ φανεροῖς ἀποτυπώσαντες πλάσμασι, τοῖς καθάπερ ἐκ βίβλων τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἀναλέγειν τὰ περὶ θεῶν μεμαθηκόσι γράμματα. Θαυμαστὸν δὲ οὐδὲν ξύλα καὶ λίθους ἡγεῖσθαι τὰ ξόανα τοὺς ἀμαθεστάτους, καθὰ δὴ καὶ τῶν γραμμάτων οἱ ἀνόητοι λίθους μὲν ὁρῶσι τὰς στήλας, ξύλα δὲ τὰς δέλτους, ἐξυφασμένην δὲ πάπυρον τὰς βίβλους.
>
> I show the concepts of theological wisdom, in which men revealed the god and the powers of the god through images akin to sense-perception,

100 Pl., *Rep*. 379a; Arist., *Met.* 1000a9 and 1071b27; Philodemus, *Pietas* 48; Philolaus, F 14 Huffman; Plut., *De defectu oraculorum* 409e-438d; Plot., *Enn*. 3.5.8; Burkert (1972), 248 n. 47.

101 Lamberton (1986), 27–31.

102 See Addey (2014a), 43–82 for parallellism between oracles, allegory and mystery cult in Neoplatonism.

> and expressed invisible things with visible forms, to those who have learned to read the writings on gods from statues as from books. It is not surprising that the most ignorant consider images as mere pieces of wood and stone, even as those who do not understand letters perceive monuments as stones, and writing-tablets as pieces of wood, and books as woven papyrus.

In this passage, the striking point is that Porphyry declines to reveal the hidden meanings of images to the most ignorant who consider them as simple material, by which he also means those who do not respect divine things. In *De Antro*, Porphyry also targets the same type of audiences as in the passage of *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, those who respect the divine things, and have learned the writings of Homer. He provides his audiences with a way of gradually training their minds through ancient texts,[103] which are not easily grasped since they reveal other things beyond the surface meanings.

The following part of this section moves on to analyse in what way Porphyry starts and constructs various discussions; in other words, his methodology in *De Antro*. At the beginning of the essay, Porphyry begins by quoting Cronius, according to whom the description of the cave is not based on the actual facts, since such a cave does not exist in the geographical records of the island.[104] On the other hand, it is also hard to believe that, for the sake of poetic licence, *poetica licentia* (κατὰ ποιητικὴν ἐξουσίαν, *De Antro* 2.4), Homer would fabricate such a double-gated cave, one for men to descend, the other for the immortals to ascend. For this reason, Homer must have 'narrated allegorically and hinted at something else' (ἀλληγορεῖν τι καὶ αἰνίττεσθαι, *De Antro* 3.2-3). Porphyry criticises Cronius' rejection of a real cave in *De Antro*, as is also found in his *On the Styx* (F 374–F 376 Smith), in which Porphyry historically and geographically attempts to prove that the Styx is a river on the surface of the earth in Greece and India, opposing the suggestion that it is a fabrication of Homer as a product of the poetic licence.[105]

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103 See Rappe (2000), 17–8 for Porphyry's use of *Sententia* 32 for training purposes; Edwards (1996), 89 suggests, 'Porphyry meant to write, not only a work of interpretation, but a manual for interpreters, and one that might be construed as a tacit reprimand to teachers who purported, like the Gnostics, to arrive at truth without the aid of other men's endeavours.'

104 Porphyry's geographical interest and knowledge might be rooted in the fact that Tyre, his native country, had a reputation for teaching geography, see Grainger (1991), 185; Simmons (2015), 6.

105 See Johnson (2013), 31–7 for a detailed discussion of *On the Styx*.

Why does Porphyry support the historical actuality of the cave apart from his erudition? Johnson claims that Porphyry did not entirely limit his works to the elite so that the protreptic function of the treatise encourages a broader but well-educated audience to attend to higher matters.[106] Johnson sees Porphyry's criticism of Cronius' rejection of a historical cave in Ithaca as a rejection of a too-rarefied audience for the treatise; on the other hand, the acceptance of a physical cave marks an acceptance of a broader audience. I think that in order to show Homer's excellence and strengthen his credibility, Porphyry might have used a correspondence approach to the treatise, along with a coherence approach to it.[107] In the former a proposition should correspond to historical, literary, and philosophical fact in order to be true; in the latter a proposition should be coherent within an historical, literary, and philosophical system. Consequently, Porphyry proves an historical fact derived from Homer's text, just as he also proves its coherence through allegorical reading. In contrast, for example, Porphyry never uses coherence theory to criticise the New Testament because he believes that the scripture has no coherence, but he uses correspondence theory to refute the historical fact derived from it, as stated earlier.[108]

Returning briefly to the subject of poetic licence, it enables poets to have a sort of freedom of speech (schol. AT *Il.* 1.1d ex.), such as at the beginning of the *Iliad*, when Homer orders the Muses, rather than praying for their help, or changes and invents myths for various reasons, for instance, for political purposes (schol. Pi. *N.* 9.20), honouring their home towns (schol. S. *OC* 712).[109] In the scholia, freedom of speech is generally used to defend poets' inconsistencies against criticism. Aristarchus suggests that poets like Homer should not be examined carefully, even if there are hypothetical contradictions in their works, because they are there by virtue of poetic licence. According to him, each text should be commented by itself (schol. D *Il.* 5.385) and the reader should not seek any other external criteria to interpret the text.[110] In contrast to Aristarchus, Porphyry rejects the idea that Homer's description of the cave is 'a product of poetic imagination or simply an ordinary and random piece of fiction written to amuse the readers' (ὄντος τοῦ διηγήματος πλάσμα μὲν ὡς

106 Ibid., 184.

107 Berchman (1995), 668 n. 43 for a brief and lucid account of correspondence theory and coherence theory.

108 Ibid., 657–73 for a full discussion of Porphyry's criticism and his influence on the Patristic origins of biblical criticism.

109 Nünlist (2009), 174–84.

110 Struck (2004), 22–3.

ἔτυχεν εἰς ψυχαγωγίαν πεποιημένον μὴ εἶναι, *De Antro* 4.1-3). Instead, 'obscurities' in the text (ἀσαφειῶν, *De Antro* 4.1) are a challenging factor for the interpreter. Porphyry's stance on this subject is not unusual because he attempts to rationalise Homer's verses according to certain philosophical principles, apart from reconciling Homer with the Platonists, who believe that the cosmos did not exist at random or by chance, but was the product of the god's mind and intelligent nature (*De Antro* 32.8-10). As a result of this theory, any argument about the randomness of Homer's verses should be rejected.

Although Porphyry proves that the cave in question actually exists on Ithaca by referring to the work of Artemidorus of Ephesus, it does not prevent him from asking the question as to what the 'intention' (βούλησιν, *De Antro* 4.20) of the poet may have been in providing this description.[111] The historicity of the cave is a clear reference to its association with the physical world as we have stated above. The physical existence of the cave is not the decisive factor for the allegorical interpretation, but rather the mystical symbolism of the cave as interpreted by the ancients and Homer. Porphyry's exegesis is grounded on the fact that Homer suggests the 'images of higher truths' (εἰκόνας τῶν θειοτέρων) in the form of a story (*De Antro* 36.2-6). This assumption cannot be ruled out if 'the wisdom of antiquity' (τὴν παλαιὰν σοφίαν) and the 'whole excellence' (πάσης ἀρετῆς) of Homer are considered. It is not accidental that the divine images conveyed by Homer are perfectly compatible with the higher truths offered by the philosophers, and with the visual and physical expression of cults, particularly Persian and Egyptian.

At first glance, Porphyry's potpourri of associations confuses more than it elucidates. He says repeatedly that Homer 'speaks in riddles,' but, in fact, Porphyry himself seems to be the one speaking in riddles. On closer inspection, however, his interpretations prove to be not random but reciprocally connected – just as he persistently emphasises that Homer does not speak at random. Even so, Porphyry's method raises many questions, which have so far not been satisfactorily answered, and many of his associations remain to be properly elucidated and contextualised. For example, why is the cave sacred not to nymphs but to Naiad nymphs? Why is it lovely and dark at the same time? What is the meaning of the cave with double gates? Why are the looms made of stone but not any other substance? Porphyry raises those issues at length, particularly in *De Antro* 3.2–4.7, but we have run through all these before in Chapter 1.2:

111 Cf. Plato's discussion on the purpose or meaning of a poem in *Prot.* 344b and on signification of a word in *Crat.* 421b.

(3.2-4.7) ἀλληγορεῖν τι καὶ αἰνίττεσθαι διὰ τούτων τὸν ποιητήν, πολυπραγμονεῖν ἀναγκάζοντα τίς μὲν ἀνθρώπων πύλη, τίς δὲ θεῶν, καὶ τί βούλεται τὸ ἄντρον τοῦτο τὸ δίθυρον, <ἱερὸν> μὲν νυμφῶν εἰρημένον, τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἐπήρατον καὶ ἠεροειδές, οὐδαμῶς τοῦ σκοτεινοῦ ἐπηράτου ὄντος, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον φοβεροῦ· διὰ τί δὲ οὐχ ἁπλῶς νυμφῶν λέγεται ἱερόν, ἀλλὰ πρόσκειται εἰς ἀκρίβειαν τὸ 'αἳ νηιάδες καλέονται' τίς δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν κρατήρων καὶ ἀμφιφορέων παράληψις, οὐδενὸς τῶν ἐγχεομένων αὐτοῖς παρειλημμένου, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐν αὐτοῖς ὡς ἐν σμήνεσι τιθαιβώσσουσι μέλισσαι. οἵ τε περιμήκεις ἱστοὶ ἔστωσαν ἀναθήματα ταῖς νύμφαις· ἀλλὰ τί μὴ ἐκ ξύλων ἢ ἄλλης ὕλης, λίθινοι δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς οἱ ἀμφιφορεῖς καὶ οἱ κρατῆρες; καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἧττον ἀσαφές· τὸ δ' ἐν τοῖς λιθίνοις ἱστοῖς τούτοις τὰς νύμφας ὑφαίνειν ἁλιπόρφυρα φάρη, οὐκ ἰδέσθαι θαῦμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκοῦσαι. τίς γὰρ ἂν πιστεύσαι θεὰς ἁλιπόρφυρα ἱμάτια ὑφαίνειν <ἐν> σκοτεινῷ ἄντρῳ ἐπὶ λιθίνων ἱστῶν, καὶ ταῦτα ὁρατὰ φάσκοντος εἶναι ἀκούων τὰ θεῶν ὑφάσματα καὶ ἁλουργῆ; ἐφ' οἷς καὶ τὸ δίθυρον εἶναι τὸ ἄντρον θαυμαστόν, τῶν μέν τινων ἀνθρώποις εἰς κατάβασιν πεποιημένων, τῶν δ' αὖ πάλιν θεοῖς· καὶ ὅτι αἱ μὲν ἀνθρώποις πορεύσιμοι πρὸς βορρᾶν ἄνεμον τετράφθαι λέγονται, αἱ δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς πρὸς νότον, οὐ μικρᾶς οὔσης ἀπορίας δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἀνθρώποις μὲν τὰ βόρεια μέρη προσένειμε, τοῖς δ' αὖ θεοῖς τὰ νότια, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνατολῇ καὶ δύσει πρὸς τοῦτο μᾶλλον κέχρηται, ὡς ἂν σχεδὸν πάντων τῶν ἱερῶν τὰ μὲν ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰς εἰσόδους ἐχόντων πρὸς ἀνατολὴν τετραμμένας, τῶν δὲ εἰσιόντων πρὸς δύσιν ἀφορώντων, ὅταν ἀντιπρόσωποι τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἑστῶτες τοῖς θεοῖς τὰς λιτὰς καὶ θεραπείας προσάγωσι. Τοιούτων ἀσαφειῶν πλήρους ὄντος τοῦ διηγήματος πλάσμα μὲν ὡς ἔτυχεν εἰς ψυχαγωγίαν πεποιημένον μὴ εἶναι, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἱστορίας τοπικῆς περιήγησιν ἔχειν, ἀλληγορεῖν δέ τι δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν ποιητήν, προσθέντα μυστικῶς καὶ ἐλαίας φυτὸν πλησίον. ἃ δὴ πάντα ἀνιχνεῦσαι καὶ ἀναπτύξαι ἔργον καὶ τοὺς παλαιοὺς νομίσαι καὶ ἡμᾶς μετ' ἐκείνων τε καὶ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς πειρᾶσθαι νῦν ἀνευρίσκειν.

(3.2-4.7) The poet allegorises in some way and speaks in riddles through these verses; Homer compels us to inquire which gate is for humans, which gate is for gods, and what he means by the cave with two entrances, why the cave is sacred to the nymphs, and why it is also both lovely and dark, since darkness is in no way lovely, but rather fearful; why it is not simply said that the cave is sacred to the nymphs, but the specification 'which are called naiads' is added; also what is the meaning of his use of the mixing bowls and amphoras, as no liquid is poured into them, <but he says> that in them bees store up honey as in beehives. Let us assume that the high looms are votive offerings for the nymphs; but are they not made out of wood or some other substance, but are they also of stone, like the amphoras and mixing-bowls? And even this is not that obscure:

> but that the nymphs weave sea-purple clothes at these stone looms is a wonder not merely to be seen, but also to hear of. Because who would believe that goddesses weave sea-purple clothes in a dark cave at stone looms, and who would believe it when he hears someone say that these clothes woven by goddesses are visible and sea-purple? In addition, it is a wonder that the cave has two entrances, the one made as a path for the descent of humans, the other, in contrast, for gods; and that the entrance accessible to humans is said to be north-facing, the other, however, the one for gods, south-facing – it being not a simple question why Homer allocates the direction of the North to humans, the direction of the South to gods, rather than using the East and West for this, since the statues and entrances in almost all temples face the East, and those who enter face the West when they stand in front of the statues to offer prayers and honour the gods. Since Homer's narration is full of such kind of obscurities, he (Cronius) says that it is not a fiction made for amusement, nor a geographical description of an actual place, but that the poet conveys some allegorical message through it, having mysteriously added an olive tree nearby. The ancients already thought that it was a hard task to track down and explain all of this, and now we shall attempt to figure it out with their help and by our own effort.

In this passage, Porphyry does not raise all of those issues haphazardly. In order to demonstrate a path for salvation of the soul as his ultimate aim, Porphyry follows a steady and deliberate course in *De Antro*. In this regard, Edwards says that in *De Antro* Porphyry divides the history of Odysseus into three chapters: 'his expiatory wanderings as a sinner, his illumination in Ithaca and his journey, under the discipline of reason, to his last home.'[112] So, the journey of the hero is a progress from the darkness of the cave to the light, under the guidance of Athena.

As the allegorical questions in the passage belong to a subject, I divide the text into four major topics. As seen in this chapter, Porphyry builds up all the arguments necessary to launch into the interpretation of Homeric verses in *De Antro* 1–4. In line with Porphyry's composition of the text, the enquiries into the double-gated cave and its loveliness and darkness represent the first main subject. Then, all the questions on nymphs, Naiad nymphs, mixing bowls and amphoras, bees, honey, high looms and their substance, sea-purple

112 Edwards (1988), 520–1. See Lamberton (1986), 130–1 for a discussion about the possible connection between the blinding of Polyphemus, which is a metaphor of suicide and Porphyry's intention of suicide (*VPlot*. 11).

garments woven by the Naiad nymphs and their colour will be collected under the topic of the process of the embodiment of the soul identified with wetness, meaning its descent into the material world. Finally, Homer's division of the cave's entrances into one for the mortals and the other for the immortals belongs to the enquiry into the various heavenly paths for the soul to descend and to ascend to the god. The part of the gates of heaven and Porphyry's interpretations of the olive tree and Odyssean images such as Odysseus and the goddess Athena sitting under the tree, his stripping off the garments, and his leaving all valuable gifts in the cave, belong to the concept of the salvation of the soul.

Accordingly, the next chapter, under the title of 'The Cave as Symbol and Image of the Cosmos,' will focus on the interpretation of Homer's cave as a symbol of the cosmos, which constitutes the first crucial part of the treatise (*De Antro* 5–9). It will evaluate the concept of the cave as a symbol of the material world, from which human beings must escape to attain the intelligible realm. The third chapter, under the title of 'Embodiment,' will explore the sections of *De Antro* that deal with the world of *genesis* and, in a narrower sense, the human body and the senses, against the background of Neoplatonic metaphysics, but also common Greek symbolic thinking, which underpins Porphyry's associations and identifications (*De Antro* 10–19). The last chapter, under the title of 'The Path Towards the Immortality of the Soul,' will discuss Porphyry's association of the journey of the soul with the two entrances of Homer's cave, the northern one for human beings and the southern one for immortals, along with Porphyry's overarching interpretation of Odysseus' travels as the journey of the soul and its salvation from the irrational to the rational through virtue, personified by the goddess Athena (*De Antro* 20–35).

CHAPTER 2

The Cave as Symbol and Image of the Cosmos

The interpretation of Homer's cave as symbol of the cosmos constitutes the first and crucial part of Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, which covers many different symbolic uses of caves in mystery cults, namely the cult of Mithras and the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries; in poetry, notably the *Hymn to Apollo*; and in philosophy, notably Plato's Allegory of the Cave in *Republic* 7, itself inspired by Pythagorean and Empedoclean thoughts. Porphyry's examination starts by exploring the real caves in the world, and extends to what the cave symbolises ontologically. Porphyry's examination is predicated on Homer's dualistic description of the cave, lovely/beautiful (ἐπήρᾶτον) and dark/misty (ἠεροειδες, σκοτεινόν), by presenting the Mithraic cave and Platonic cave in his exegesis:[1] the former is a place where the followers believe they will find the salvation of their souls, and the latter a place which one should avoid at all costs, should one wish to lead a philosophical life.

This chapter, following Porphyry's extended interpretation, will focus on the justification of the concept of the cave as a symbol of the cosmos and seek to explain the meaning of its features described as lovely and dark by Homer in Porphyry's thought, which in fact show the differences in its perception by the senses and the mind. Porphyry basically adheres to the doctrines of Plato and Plotinus, as we will see later, the darkness of the cave perceived by intellect is nothing but a mystical and unique experience to attain higher truth at the intellectual level as the loveliness of the cave is due to its participation in the Forms.

1 The Materialisation of the Cave

Porphyry's examination of the notion of the cave as a symbol of the cosmos covers some philosophical concepts derived from the Presocratic philosophers in justification of the relation between the cosmos and Matter and extends to the mysteries of Mithras, whose followers attempted to find the salvation of their souls. Porphyry follows a historical and chronological order in his detailed examination.

1 Struck (2004), 72–3.

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1.1 *The Cave, Cosmos, and Matter*

Porphyry begins the physical examination of Homer's cave by referring to philosophical concepts which date back to the Presocratic philosophers such as Anaximander, Heraclitus and Xenophanes of Colophon, the last being identified as the founder of Eleatic philosophy.[2] Here Porphyry shares the common feature of allegorical readers, such as Cornutus and Numenius, as he uses various ancient sources in his analysis of the concept of the cave. The following passage (*De Antro* 5.1–6.2), as part of the wide-ranging discussion, shows that the cave, ontologically, symbolises the material world or cosmos:

> (5.1–6.2) Ἄντρα μὲν δὴ ἐπιεικῶς οἱ παλαιοὶ καὶ σπήλαια τῷ κόσμῳ καθιέρουν καθ' ὅλον τε αὐτὸν καὶ κατὰ μέρη λαμβάνοντες, σύμβολον μὲν τῆς ὕλης ἐξ ἧς ὁ κόσμος τὴν γῆν παραδιδόντες (διό τινες καὶ αὐτόθεν τὴν ὕλην τὴν γῆν εἶναι ἐτίθεντο), τὸν <δὲ> ἐκ τῆς ὕλης γινόμενον κόσμον διὰ τῶν ἄντρων παριστῶντες, ὅτι τε ὡς ἐπὶ πολὺ αὐτοφυῆ τὰ ἄντρα καὶ συμφυῆ τῇ γῇ ὑπὸ πέτρας περιεχόμενα μονοειδοῦς, ἧς τὰ μὲν ἔνδον κοῖλα, τὰ δ' ἔξω εἰς τὸ ἀπεριόριστον τῆς γῆς ἀνεῖται· αὐτοφυὴς δὲ ὁ κόσμος καὶ [αὐτοσυμφυὴς] προσπεφυκὼς τῇ ὕλῃ, ἣν λίθον καὶ πέτραν διὰ τὸ ἀργὸν καὶ ἀντίτυπον πρὸς τὸ εἶδος εἶναι ᾐνίττοντο, ἄπειρον κατὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἀμορφίαν τιθέντες. ῥευστῆς δ' οὔσης αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ εἴδους δι' οὗ μορφοῦται καὶ φαίνεται καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐστερημένης, τὸ ἔνυδρον καὶ ἔνικμον τῶν ἄντρων καὶ σκοτεινὸν καὶ ὡς ὁ ποιητὴς ἔφη ἠεροειδὲς οἰκείως ἐδέξαντο εἰς σύμβολον τῶν προσόντων τῷ κόσμῳ διὰ τὴν ὕλην. Διὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν ὕλην ἠεροειδὴς καὶ σκοτεινὸς ὁ κόσμος.
>
> (5.1–6.2) The ancients fittingly dedicated caves and caverns to the cosmos, considering them either as a whole or in their individual parts. They interpreted earth as a symbol of the matter out of which the cosmos is formed (hence some even automatically assumed that matter equals earth), and they represented the cosmos, which is generated from matter, by means of caves, because caves, for the most part, are naturally formed and bound up with earth, encompassed by uniform rock, whose interior is hollow (κοῖλα) and whose exterior extends into earth without demarcation. The cosmos is naturally formed and is bound up with matter, which they signified through stone and rock because it is idle and resistant to form, making it indefinite (ἄπειρον) in accordance with its formlessness. Since matter is in a state of flux (ῥευστῆς δ' οὔσής αὐτῆς) and deprived of the form which can receive shape and make it perceptible as an entity, they appropriately took the wetness and humidity of caves, and

2 Pl., *Soph.* 242c-d and Arist., *Met.* 986b.

> their darkness (σκοτεινὸν) and (as the Poet says) 'mistiness,' (ἠεροειδὲς) as symbolic of the characteristics of the cosmos that are due to matter. Because of Matter the cosmos is, therefore, misty and dark (ἠεροειδὴς καὶ σκοτεινὸς).

In this passage, Porphyry postulates that there is an established relationship between caves or caverns, the cosmos, earth and Matter: the cosmos or the physical world is identified with caves and caverns in a microcosmic sense, or as if caves and caverns were the microcosmic reflection of the cosmos, and earth is the symbol of the matter of which the cosmos is comprised. At first sight, the statement 'some even automatically assumed that matter equals earth' appears to be Xenophanian (*De Antro* 5.3-4), the idea that earth is the 'first principle' (ἀρχή) out of which the cosmos is generated, or a natural formation in which living creatures live.[3] However, it was a common Greek belief that living beings were generated from earth and wetness, for example, the story of Hephaestus' creation of Pandora by mixing earth and water in Hesiod (*Op.* 61).[4]

In *De Antro* 5.10, Porphyry refers to the concept of *apeiron*, meaning 'boundless' or 'unlimited,' which dates back to Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 B.C.E.).[5] It is appropriate to assume that the *apeiron* is a mass of substance called boundless or limitless because of its lack of containment or its qualitative indetermination. In this sense, it recalls the neutrality of *chaos*, the pre-cosmic state of the universe, in Hesiod (*Th.* 116). Porphyry's commentary on *apeiron* in his *Homeric Questions* (*ad Il.* 14.200) may be helpful in elucidating his understanding of this controversial term. Porphyry, there, examines three Homeric lines referring to the 'boundlessness' of earth, which seem to be contradictory: Homer calls the

3 Xenophanes, 21 B 27 DK = Theodoretus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* 4.5; Arist., *Met.* 986b and 989a; *De Cael.* 303b; *Phys.* 187a for Aristotle's claim that nobody assumed earth as primary substance. See Guthrie (1962), 383–7; Lesher (1992), 124–8; Graham (2006), 70–7 for the doxographical controversy about the fragment. Other fragments: Xenophanes, 21 B 29 DK = Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotles' Physics* 1.5.125 and 21 B 33 DK = Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 10.314 = *Against the Physicists* 2.314; see also Lesher (1992), 131–4; Simonini (2010), 95.

4 See Porphyry's reference to the myth of Pandora (*Op.* 94–98) in *De Antro* 30.4-6.

5 Arist., *Phys.* 203b4-15 affirms that Anaximander regarded the *apeiron* as the origin or source of the material principle (ἀρχή), and that it is temporally and spatially infinite because of its eternity (ἀίδιον, 12 B 2 DK) and immortality (ἀθάνατον, 12 B 3 DK). In addition to its temporal and spatial infinity, the *apeiron* covers all things and rules them (*Phys.* 203b11-12 = 12 A 15 DK). The *apeiron* is a distinctive principle, being neither air, nor water, nor earth (12 B 1 DK; D.L., 2.1 = 12 A 1 DK). See also Barnes (1982), 28–37; Kahn (1985), 231–9; Naddaf (2005), 67–70; Graham (2006), 28–34.

earth 'boundless' in *Iliad* 20.58 and *Odyssey* 1.98, whereas in *Iliad* 14.200 he lets Hera say 'for I am going to visit the *limits* of all-nurturing earth.' In his attempt to reconcile these Homeric lines, Porphyry presents its various definitions, of which one example is particularly useful as he also explains it with respect to magnitude related to size or number in other examples. In this example, he states that *apeiron* is used for what is circular and spherical in shape. The circumference of a circle or sphere does not have a beginning or an end, that is to say, they do not have certain boundaries from somewhere to somewhere else. Thus, every point in them could be a beginning or an end. Although these geometrical figures are not infinite in terms of size, they are boundless because they cannot be said to have distinct boundaries.

Regarding Plotinus' treatment of *apeiron*, his interpretation of *apeiron* in *Ennead* 2.4.7.13-20 refers obliquely to Anaximander.[6] Here Plotinus reasons that the *apeiron* can be considered as a proper explanation of Matter if it means the indefinite substrate that is the basis of physical bodies (*Enn.* 2.4.15.8-17). Matter can neither be definite nor defined, but it is the indefinite itself. This indefiniteness represents imperfection which is inherent only in Matter (*Enn.* 2.4.5.28). Thus, Matter ought to be named *apeiron* in order to express its indefinite, unqualified, insubstantial and unintelligent nature. Although Porphyry's brief statement provides little explanation in *De Antro* 5.10, his definition of Matter as indefinite or *apeiron* due to its formlessness is consistent with Plotinus' explanation of the relationship between the *apeiron* and Matter, a relationship which is intrinsic to non-being, which is perpetually indefinite and inadequate; an image of being and the possible source of the material world, and yet not containing any reality (*Enn.* 1.8.3, 3.6.7, and 6.6.3).[7] Matter can be conceived as infinity as opposed to measurability, boundlessness as opposed to limitedness, shapelessness as opposed to form, always inferior as opposed to sufficiency in itself, indeterminate, entirely passive (*Enn.* 1.8.3.12-15).

Porphyry continues to define Matter and states that Matter is in a state of flux (ῥευστῆς δ' οὔσης, *De Antro* 5.11). Matter's state of flux is a reference to Heraclitus' flux theory.[8] Porphyry's reference to the flux theory is appropriate for the definition of the material realm where souls are embodied and which symbolises all pleasures, passions, emotions and toils from which a wise man

6 Stamatellos (2007), 139–42.

7 See also Shaw (1995), 28–9 for a comparison of Plotinus' and Iamblichus' descriptions of Matter.

8 Heraclitus, 22 B 12 DK; Pl., *Theaet.* 160d and *Crat.* 401d; Arist., *Met.* 1010a7-15; Barnes (1982), 65–9; Robinson (1996), 81–2; Graham (2006), 129–30. Porphyry also defines the involvement of 'sense-perception with matter as always much-mixed and fluid' in his commentary on Ptolemy's *Harmonics* (18.12): ἡ δ' αἴσθησις μεθ' ὕλης πάντοτε πολυμιγοῦς τε καὶ ῥευστῆς.

should remove himself. This view is also found in Numenius' brief statement which describes Matter as inclined to 'desire' (ἐπιθυμητικόν) and 'being in flux' (ῥεούσης).[9] Like Aristotle, Plotinus refers to Heraclitus as one of the Presocratic philosophers and counts him among material monists (*Enn.* 5.1.9.3-5).[10] In order to explain the difference between the undivided, formless and transcendental principle and the material world of coming into existence found in Heraclitus, Plotinus discusses both the Heraclitean material world and the eternal flux of becoming.[11] Porphyry's mention of the Heraclitean flux theory in *De Antro*, with reference to the material world of 'becoming,' seems to be compatible with both Plotinus' distinction between the transcendental principle and the material world of *genesis* and Platonic intelligible being and perceptible 'becoming' in the *Timaeus*.

In *De Antro* 5.7, Porphyry describes the inner part of 'caves' (ἄντρα) and 'caverns' (σπήλαια) as κοῖλα, a term associated with Plato: the geographical description of the earth as a hollow spherical body is found in *Phaedo* 108e.[12] Socrates claims that everywhere there are 'many hollows' (πολλὰ κοῖλα, *Phaedo* 109b5), different in appearance and size, in which water, mist and air have gathered. Water, mist and air are in fact the residue of the aether that always flows in the hollows of earth. Human beings dwell in the hollows of the earth, even if they are unaware of this (*Phaedo* 109b-c).[13] For hollows, Anaxagoras (c. 510–428 B.C.E) seems to have been one of Plato's sources,[14] who reportedly claimed that the earth is hollow (κοίλη) and includes water 'in its hollow places' (ἐν τοῖς κοιλώμασιν).[15] In his examination of the cave as a natural formation, to make a physical connection between caves and caverns, the cosmos, earth and Matter, Porphyry draws on the Presocratic philosophers, passionate observers of heaven and earth, who believed that the natural world was explicable in terms of

9 Numenius, F 11 des Places = F 20 Leemans = Eus., *PE* 11.17.11-18.5.

10 Possible sources of Plotinus are Heraclitus, 22 B 10, B 12, B 50, and B 91 DK; D.L., 9.8; Pl., *Crat.* 402a8-10: the flux becoming; *Tim.*: the world of intelligible being and the world of perceptible becoming; Arist., *Met.* 987a33-34 and 1078b12ff, and *De Cael.* 298b29-33; see Stamatellos (2007), 44–8.

11 Heraclitus, 22 B 10 DK = Arist., *De Mundo* 396b20.

12 The sphericity of the earth is ascribed to Pythagoras or to Parmenides (Theophrastus, 28 A 44 DK).

13 Burnet (1911), 109–10; Hackforth (1955), 173–5; Dorter (1982), 164. It is ascribed to Pythagoras or to Parmenides (Theophrastus, 28 A 44 DK).

14 Anaxagoras, 59 A 42 DK = Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 1.8.1 (D. 561; W. 13).

15 Archelaus, a pupil of Anaxagoras and a possible teacher of Socrates (5th century B.C.E.), alternatively asserted that the earth was originally a lake, high at its circumference and concave (κοίλη) in the center, see Archelaus, 60 A 4.14 DK = Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 1.9 (D. 563; W. 15).

fundamental material principles. All the concepts used for the definition of Matter justify Homer's description of the cave as dark and Porphyry's overall aim, that is, to demonstrate that the material world should be avoided, particularly if one seeks to attain the truth.

1.2 *The Cosmos: Beautiful and Dark*

> (6.2–8) Διὰ δὲ τὴν τοῦ εἴδους συμπλοκὴν καὶ διακόσμησιν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ κόσμος ἐκλήθη, καλός τέ ἐστι καὶ ἐπέραστος. ὅθεν οἰκείως ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἂν ῥηθείη ἄντρον ἐπήρατον μὲν τῷ εὐθὺς ἐντυγχάνοντι διὰ τὴν τῶν εἰδῶν μέθεξιν, ἠεροειδὲς δὲ σκοποῦντι τὴν ὑποβάθραν αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν εἰσιόντι τῷ νῷ· ὥστε τὰ μὲν ἔξω καὶ ἐπιπολαίως ἐπήρατα, τὰ δ' ἔνδον καὶ ἐν βάθει ἠεροειδῆ.
>
> (6.2–8) But because of the combination of form and the orderly arrangement of brought about by form, from which the cosmos has also received its name, it is beautiful (καλός) and lovely (ἐπέραστος). Hence it [the cosmos] might be appropriately described as a cave that is lovely at first sight because of its participation in the forms (διὰ τὴν τῶν εἰδῶν μέθεξιν) but, on the other hand, as one that is misty (ἠεροειδὲς) if one examines its substratum and enters into it with one's intellect; so it is lovely on the outside and on the surface but misty inside and in depth.

This section contains the analysis of the characteristics of the cave described by Homer as 'lovely and dark,' which Porphyry exhibits as a paradox in *De Antro* 3.5–7 (τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἐπήρατον καὶ ἠεροειδές, οὐδαμῶς τοῦ σκοτεινοῦ ἐπηράτου ὄντος), in which he states that the darkness is not lovely but rather fearful. In *De Antro* 6.2–8, Porphyry rationalises this paradox by discussing the concept of 'participation in the Forms' and the perception through the mind, which are references to the loveliness and darkness of the cave, respectively, a discussion based on his identification of the cave as the cosmos for its loveliness and Matter for its darkness in *De Antro* 5.

1.2.1 Participation in the Forms

In his justification of Homer's description of the cave as lovely, Porphyry states that the participation of the cosmos in the ideas or Forms (διὰ τὴν τῶν εἰδῶν μέθεξιν, *De Antro* 6.5) is the reason why it appears lovely. The phrase 'participation in the ideas' is mostly found in Plato's *Parmenides*, which is perhaps his most puzzling dialogue, featuring an imaginary discussion between an old and noble Parmenides and an inexperienced Socrates. Apart from this dialogue, Plato uses 'partaking,' μετέχειν, and 'participating,' μεταλαμβάνειν, in his other

dialogues.[16] In the *Protagoras,* his reference to humans 'partaking of justice' (δίκης μετέχειν, *Prot*. 322d5) is an implication of fairness, while it is not so certain that the 'human partaking of a divine portion' (θείας μετέσχε μοίρας, *Prot*. 322a3) implies that the human becomes, to any extent, divine. In the *Euthydemus,* Socrates says that Dionysodorus also 'partakes of discussions,' along with his brother Euthydemus (μετέχει δὲ καὶ οὗτος τῶν λόγων, *Euthyd*. 271b8). Also, in the *Phaedo* (100d4-8), Socrates briefly remarks that what makes something beautiful is the Form of Beauty itself through participation, without giving any explanation as to what the nature of the relation between participation and the thing is.

As regards the loveliness of Homer's cave (or the cosmos), let us now discuss the relevant passages of Plato's *Timaeus* and of Porphyry's commentaries on this dialogue in order to elucidate how Porphyry evaluates the loveliness of the cosmos. Because the dialogue is mainly an account of the formation of the cosmos and its order and beauty, it is a complementary text to Porphyry's discussion on the loveliness of the cosmos in the treatise. We will later turn to Porphyry's *Commentary on the Parmenides* to explain the perception of the cosmos according to the interaction of the strata with each other in the Neoplatonic cosmology and metaphysics.

In the *Timaeus,* two main reasons for the beauty of the cosmos are presented: it is the most beautiful of all the things that have come to be (ὁ μὲν γὰρ κάλλιστος τῶν γεγονότων, *Tim.* 29a4) because the Demiurge fashions it according to an eternal Paradigm, which Proclus deems the most divine (τὸ θειότατον, *In Tim.* 1.335.6-7 Diehl); and the Demiurge himself is also the best cause of all (ὁ δ' ἄριστος τῶν αἰτίων, *Tim.* 29a6). Proclus examines how Plato employs the terms beautiful and most beautiful, and good and best in *Timaeus* 29a5-8, and, according to his report, Porphyry interprets the beauty of the cosmos and the Demiurge as the best cause of all, as follows:[17]

> Προστίθησι δὲ ὁ Πορφύριος, ὅτι οὔτε, εἰ ἄριστος ὁ δημιουργός, ἕπεται τὸ βλέπειν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸ ἀίδιον, εἰ μὴ καλὰ δημιουργοῖ, οὔτε, εἰ καλὰ δημιουργοίη [τις], τὸ βλέπειν πρὸς τὸ ἀίδιον, εἰ μὴ ὡς ἄριστος δημιουργὸς τὰ καλὰ ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τύχην – διὸ συνέπλεξεν ἀμφότερα ὁ Πλάτων.
>
> Porphyry adds that, if the Demiurge is the best, it does not follow that he looks to that which is everlasting [as paradigm] if he does not create beautiful products, and that, if he were to create beautiful products,

16 Dancy (2006), 13 and 186–8.

17 Trans. Runia (2008), 187–8 n. 772; F 44.6-10 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.332.9-14 Diehl.

> it does not follow that he looks to that which is everlasting if he does not as the best craftsman make beautiful objects, but he could do this by chance, and this was the reason that Plato interwove both terms.

In this passage, Porphyry takes the view that the connection between the eternal model and the Demiurge ensures the beauty of the cosmos and that the cosmos was not created by chance. The latter idea also occurs in *De Antro* 32.8-10, in which Porphyry says that the cosmos did not exist at random or by chance, but was the finished product of the god's (the Demiurge) mind and intelligent nature (ὁ κόσμος οὐκ εἰκῇ οὐδ' ὡς ἔτυχε γέγονεν, ἀλλ' ἔστι φρονήσεως θεοῦ καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως ἀποτέλεσμα).[18] Elsewhere, according to Proclus' report in his commentary on the undgrudging character of the Demiurge in *Timaeus* 29e2-3, Porphyry thinks that generated things having acquired 'harmony' (ἡ ἁρμονία), 'proportion or symmetry' (ἡ συμμετρία),[19] and 'order' (ἡ τάξις) are beautiful and good (F 46 Sodano = *In Tim.* 1.366 13–27 Diehl).[20] Regarding Plato's statement in *Timaeus* 30c5, where he says that nothing that bears a resemblance to anything imperfect could ever become beautiful, Proclus claims that Plato does not assign any of 'the particular things' (τῶν μερικῶν) perfection or completeness, since each of them is imperfect in comparison with the universe (πρὸς τὸ ὅλον).[21] Proclus illustrates the proposition that becoming whole through participation makes any particular living thing beautiful and perfect, and later particular things might be beautiful but not 'most beautiful' as is the cosmos (*In Tim.* 1.422.5-423.7 Diehl). Proclus' quotation from Porphyry also supports the idea that the beauty of the cosmos derives from having a share of the whole, that is, the intelligible realm (F 52 Sodano):[22]

> αἴτιον δέ, φησὶν ὁ Πορφύριος, ὅτι ἐν ἐκείνοις τὸ μέρος ὅλον ἐστί· πάντα γάρ ἐστιν ἐν ἑκάστῳ μερικῶς ὅσα τῷ ὅλῳ παντελῶς διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν τῶν νοητῶν εἰδῶν. καὶ ἔστι μὲν ἀληθὴς ὁ λόγος, ὅτι καὶ τῶν μερῶν ἐν ἐκείνοις ἕκαστον ὅλον πῃ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὰ πάντα κοινωνίαν ὁλούμενον, ἓν μὲν ὂν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν, πάντα δὲ κατὰ μετουσίαν.

18 See also Chapter 4, 'The Goddess Athena as symbol of *phronesis*.'

19 See Chapter 2, 'The Mithraic Cave and Mithras as the Maker and Father of All, and Ruler of *Genesis*' for discussion of συμμέτρους that Porphyry uses in *De Antro* 6.14 for his account of the Mithraic cave.

20 Runia (2008), 228.

21 See *In Tim.* 1.421.7-422.5 Diehl for Proclus' elaborate discussion of Plato's statement.

22 Trans. Runia (2008), 305–6; F 52.12-17 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.422.14-20 Diehl; Sodano (1964), 39–40, according to Sodano the citation goes from 1.422.5 to 1.422.26 in Proclus' commentary.

> The reason is, Porphyry says, that in them the part is a whole. For all things are present in each partially just as they are in the whole completely on account of the union of the intelligible forms. And it is true to say that each of the parts in them is, in some way, whole, being constituted a whole in consequence of its association with all, and it is one or unity in essence, but all things according to participation.

In line with Proclus' and Porphyry's statement quoted above, we can conclude that the seven planets and the fixed stars which compose the physical universe are beautiful only when they are involved in the whole, for wholeness displays beauty appropriate to it. Beauty and perfection, which belong to each heavenly body, are due to the fact that each is a part of the whole, and this participation enables them to be whole. As Plato's Form of Good is the source of everything, in accordance with the eternal model of the Forms, the Demiurge fashions the cosmos, which has a share in the Form of Beauty and Good. In the hierarchical model of the Neoplatonists, the cosmos has a lower kind of beauty because it is situated in the remotest substrate from the supreme principles and its participation in the Forms occurs by means of the Demiurge or the demiurgic cause, which has a dominant influence on the cosmos in comparison with the paradigmatic cause because the former has a lower position than the latter.

For the purpose of understanding how the cosmos (or the material world) participates in the Forms, it is now appropriate to turn to Plato's *Parmenides*, where all the arguments in the dialogue concern the relationship between the Forms and physical objects. It is difficult to say which argument(s) Porphyry has in mind or whether any of those arguments is in his mind, because the dialogue seems to contain Plato's preliminary analysis on the subject, whereas Proclus considers the dialogue as maieutic.[23] The fourth argument, 'paradigm and image' (*Parm.* 132d) seems consistent with the context of *De Antro* in the sense that the argument implies an asymmetrical relation of beings and compares the superiority of the Forms with these beings which are 'images' (εἰκόνες), like shadows and reflections in water and surfaces, as in the case of *De Antro* in which Porphyry refers to the cave as the 'image of the cosmos' in *De Antro* 6.13 (εἰκόνα for the Mithraic cave), *De Antro* 8.19 (εἰκόνα, twice for the Platonic cave), *De Antro* 12.9 (εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου), *De Antro* 21.3 (ἄντρου εἰκόνα … τοῦ κόσμου), *De Antro* 32.10-11 (τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ κόσμου τῷ ἄντρῳ). We will later see that the asymmetrical (or vertical) relation between the Forms and the material world reflects the mistiness of the cave when it is perceived by the mind.

23 Dillon (1987), 199.

However, the argument may be appropriate because of its indication of the inferiority of the material world, which supports Porphyry's aim throughout the treatise.

In his commentary on the *Parmenides,* Proclus refers to criticism from a certain predecessor who might be Amelius or Iamblichus according to Dillon,[24] but possibly not Porphyry. Amelius or Iamblichus defends the three Middle Platonic analogies of participation and considers them as representations of the way of participation in various levels of Form: the seal in wax (*In Parm.* 841.1ff), the reflection in water (*In Parm.* 839.20ff), which appears as a reflection in the mirror in Plotinus (*Enn.* 3.6.7.24-25 and 3.6.9.18-19), and portraits and figurines (*Enn.* 3.8.2; *In Parm.* 841.18ff). Proclus rejects these three analogies because of their drawbacks. Nevertheless, he accepts the originality of these analogies and claims that sense-objects receive reflections of the Forms at the level of Soul, and they are images of intellectual forms. It is likely that Porphyry might have adopted an analogy similar to those Middle Platonic analogies concerning the reference to the cosmos' participation in the Forms in *De Antro* 6.5.

Let us now examine the notion of participation in the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*. Concerning the disputed issue of Porphyry's authorship of the commentary, Hadot identifies it as Porphyrian[25] and Dillon agrees with him, taking into account the basic tenets and the Porphyrian terminology in the commentary.[26] Bechtle, on the other hand, suspects that its origin is pre-Plotinian and Middle Platonic.[27]

In F 5 (p. 11, Fol. 93^{r}) of the commentary, Porphyry addresses the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (*Parm.* 142b-143a2),[28] whose subject is the intelligible realm, associated with νοῦς, to solve the problem of 'the multiplicity generated from the absolute One. He grounds his thought on the assumption that the first One in the first hypothesis, ἓν, is beyond being and does not participate in substance (οὐσία); on the other hand, the one in the second hypothesis, τὸ ὄν,

24 *In Parm.* 846.22ff and 847.30ff; Dillon (1987), 197.

25 I am accepting the arguments, both linguistic and philosophical, in favour of Porphyrian authorship advanced by Hadot (and Dillon), but that, even if the *Commentary* is not by Porphyry, it can be appealed to as emanating from a source close to Porphyry, and provides a significant comparanda for the elucidation of the ontological formulation of *De Antro*. See Hadot (1968), 104; cf. Edwards (1990a), 14–25; Majercik (2001), 266 n. 5 for Majercik's support for Porphyrian authorship. Remes (2008), 23 and 61.

26 Dillon (2007a), 54 n.10 and (2010), 28.

27 Bechtle (1999), 90–1 for his remarks on Hadot's position.

28 Trans. Bechtle (1999), 58–60; (1999), 170–2 for commentary. See also Lloyd (1967), 291–3 for Porphyry's telescoping of hypostases.

is different from the primal. The second hypothesis participates in substance because it is not pure, and it is a new hypostasis generated from the first One and from being, that is, it is integrated. Participation is a mutual and horizontal process of mixing the One with being. This kind of participation, which can also be found in Plato's *Sophist*,[29] is an implication of the relation of the Forms participating in each other or of the high level of *genesis*. The second type of participation, however, called vertical or hierarchical by Bechtle (F 5, p.12, Fol. 93^{v})[30] is that the second or inferior One participates in the first or superior One. Accordingly, the second One receives unity, which is why it is called whole in all parts (τὸ ὅλον). Although Porphyry's commentary on the *Parmenides* is hardly helpful in clarifying the relation between Forms and Matter through participation and although it raises some significant problems in itself, the second type of participation in the commentary ensures that the material realm's participation in the Forms is vertical.

In the commentary, Porphyry introduces a triad to explain the relation between the One and Being. This relation shows similarities with the First and Second Gods of Numenius and the Plotinian One: The First God or the Good, called 'Father,' in his own place, is absolute and indivisible, and isolated from all activities.[31] He is also called Intellect (F 16 des Places = F 25 Leemans) and Primal Intellect is equal to Essential Being (F 17 des Places = F 26 Leemans).[32] The Second God is 'Creator,' used by the First God so as to generate and produce, in the sense that the Second God contains demiurgic activities and is related to the intelligible and to the sensible. Numenius' First God is compatible with the first One in Porphyry's commentary on the *Parmenides*, while the Second God is reminiscent of the second One which is reproduced from the first One.[33]

In F 6, addressing the first hypothesis, Porphyry expresses the negative aspect of the One, which is the Plotinian One described as entirely transcendent, simple, ineffable and unqualified by any characteristic. However, the subject of the second hypothesis has the positive feature of the Plotinian One in terms of its emanative aspect, opening itself into a trinity by means of mingling with Being.[34] It is no longer the first One: 'this is One endowed with Being; being

29 *Soph.* 254d: τὸ δέ γε ὂν μεικτὸν ἀμφοῖν: ἐστὸν γὰρ ἄμφω που.

30 Bechtle (1999), 60–2 for translation and 172–4 for commentary.

31 Procl., *In Tim.*1.303 Diehl= Numenius, F 21 des Places, F 11, F 12, F 16, and F 19 des Places.

32 Dillon (1996b), 371–2.

33 See Bechtle (1999), 78–86 for a detailed discussion.

34 Dillon (2007a), 51–9. This trinity or triad is called Father, Potency or Life, and Intellect in the *Chaldean Theology*; see also Damascius, *De Principiis* 43; trans. Ahbel-Rappe (2010), 161–2; Bechtle (1999), 179; Remes (2008), 61.

endowed with being and being essentialised are what Plato means by saying that "it participates in being" (*Parm*. 142b6).'[35] To put it another way, it functions as the father or the highest element of the noetic triad on the level of existence and life and intelligence: an 'activity' (ἐνέργεια) on the level of existence is an activity at rest (ἑστῶσα) because everything forms a single unity, and thinking and thought are the same. An activity on the level of thinking is an activity turning to itself, that is to say that intellect moves towards the providence of νοῦς, and it becomes life and infinite. Thirdly, an activity on the level of life is the one 'inclining downward' from existence (ἐκνεῦσασα). On the level of life, the subject and object (thinking and thought) are no longer in unity, as Porphyry states the reason that intellect is in the state of 'indeterminacy' (ἀόριστος).

At this point, Porphyry' commentary on the *Parmenides* has some significant aspects for our theme. In line with the relation between the Plotinian One and Being as a third element, we may conclude that the cosmos (or the material world) is the object of the mind on the level of life where the connection between subject and object is loosened. Having in mind this weakness which also seems to signify the dominance of sense-perception over the mind, Porphyry justifies Homer's description of the cave as lovely, only when it is perceived by the senses. At the macrocosmic level, the material world is characterised as lovely because it is a part of the whole due to the positive features of the One in its lower aspect.[36]

1.2.2 The Cave Perceived through Intellect

In addition to his reference to the loveliness of the cave due to its participation in the Forms, Porphyry states that the cave is dark/misty for the one who contemplates its base and enters into it with 'intellect or mind' (ἠεροειδὲς δὲ σκοποῦντι τὴν ὑποβάθραν αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν εἰσιόντι τῷ νῷ, *De Antro* 6.5-6). His statement is reminiscent of Plato's *Phaedo* (65d-66a), whereby reality is not grasped by sense-perception but with intellect alone (αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ). Indeed, by his comparison of the characteristics of the cave through different perceptions, Porphyry draws our attention to the negative aspect of the material realm or 'Matter' (ἡ ὕλη) symbolised by the cave, where it is situated opposite the intelligible realm in the Neoplatonic cosmology, stating that Matter is the cause of the darkness and mistiness of the cosmos (διὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν ὕλην ἠεροειδὴς καὶ σκοτεινὸς ὁ κόσμος, *De Antro* 6.1-2). The following is firstly a brief summary of the Neoplatonic cosmology and its hierarchical structure,

35 Trans. Dillon (2007a), 56.

36 Dillon (2007a), 58 n.18 and (2010), 28.

and then the examination of the effect of Matter on our perception of the cave as dark through the mind.

Plotinus proposes a universe generated from a single, incorporeal, transcendent entity, the One, engendering the strata below itself through the process of emanation.[37] The One is unable to be either described by discourse or to be comprehended by thought and is purely a self-contained entity. Everything below the One is subjected to multiplicity. The first one is the realm of Intellect in which all intellectual realities and Plato's Forms dwell. In Plato, the Forms are objects of the thought of a divine mind and Plotinus considers them to be involved in Intellect.[38] Plotinus does not separate the Forms from their participants with respect to its relationship with them, which also protects the unity and the singularity through its relationships with other Forms. Every Form internally includes all the Forms (*Enn.* 5.8.4.6-10); for example, Goodness is just, and Justice is good. At the same time, because all connections in intellect have their own integrity, some part of goodness may not be attributed to Justice, whereas some part of Justice cannot be attributed to goodness. The realm of the Soul (or the Soul of the All or the World Soul) is where life begins. As stated in the *Timaeus*, the cosmos is a bodily, ensouled entirety. The Soul joins the cosmos into one, a reified and supreme living being, the parts of which connect to one another and form a united whole.[39]

The realm of Matter is a shadowy world which is nearly identical to evil and truly non-being. Plotinus identifies Matter (ὕλη), a term rarely used by Plato, with the receptacle (*Tim.* 52a8-b1; *Enn.* 3.6.13.19).[40] He agrees with Aristotle's interpretation of the receptacle of becoming as being Matter.[41] However, the 'receptacle' (ὑποδοχή or τὸ δεχόμενον) is questionable and uncertain as to whether it is Matter, 'space' χώρα or 'place' τόπος (*Tim.* 48e-53b). It is also called the 'nurse or the mother' (τιθήνη; τροφός, *Tim.* 88d7). According to Plato, the receptacle is the base where all things are formed, moved and shaped according to what enters it (ὑπὸ τῶν εἰσιόντων, *Tim.* 50c2).[42] Matter has stability, since it remains as itself (*Tim.* 50b6). However, Matter also has no stability, because of

37 Wilberding (2012), 217–8; Remes (2008), 35–75 (Chapter 1, 'The first principles and the metaphysical hierarchy').

38 Cf. *Tim.* 28a; see Emilsson (1988), 10–22 on Plotinus' metaphysics.

39 Remes (2008), 79.

40 For Matter: *Polit.* 272a4; *Phil.* 54c2; *Crit.* 107c3, 111c3, 114e6, 118b7, and 118e1; *Leg.* 704c8, 705c1, 761c7, 843e2, and 849d5. Reydams-Schils (1999), 28–32.

41 See *Enn.* 2.4.1.1-2, 3.6.13.12-18, 3.6.14.29-32, and 3.6.19.15-18; Arist., *Phys.* 209b says that space (χώρα) in *Tim.* 52b is the equivalent term to the term ὕλη. Shaw (1995), 27; Gerson (1998), 94.

42 *Enn.* 3.6.7.14; Fleet (1995), 172.

its destitution of determination and its various appearances at different times (*Tim.* 50c3) and it is presented as having an invisible nature (*Tim.* 51a7). As a third kind, the lack of order and of characters in the receptacle (ἄμορφος) is an echo of the precosmic state of the universe which is also found in Porphyry's description of Matter as 'indefinite because of its formlessness' in *De Antro* 5.10 (ἄπειρον κατὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἀμορφίαν).[43]

Plotinus discusses the connection between Forms and Matter, that is, participation, in various places in the *Enneads*. In *On the Descent of Soul into Bodies,* he asserts that the existence of Matter enables its participation (μετασχεῖν) in Goodness because it emanates from the One (*Enn.* 4.8.6.16-23). If the *genesis* of Matter is the result of the necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης), it cannot directly have a share in goodness. However, Matter does not need to be separate as if it were totally inaccessible to the One, since Matter is in debt to the kindness of the One for its existence. The matter of the sensible world,[44] which is generated because of necessity (*Enn.* 2.4.5.28-30), is unable to participate in goodness because it is unable to unite with the Forms (*Enn.* 3.6.14.21-22).

Indeed, the question for Plotinus is how the Forms, which are present in Matter, have an effect on each other without affecting Matter, since it is still what it was at the beginning. As he identifies Matter with the receptacle and the 'seat' or 'base' of becoming, Plotinus repeatedly uses the metaphor of a mirror to show that like a mirror Matter is unaffected by that which is reflected in it.[45] In his definition of Matter Porphyry in fact brings forward this question without giving a detailed explanation: in contrast to Plotinus' statement that the Forms are 'not dark nor resistant' within themselves (σκοτεινὸν οὐδὲ ἀντίτυπον οὐδέν, *Enn.* 5.8.4.5), Porphyry describes matter as 'resistant to form' in *De Antro* 5.9-10 (ἀντίτυπον πρὸς τὸ εἶδος). And, again, he concludes that the physical cosmos is dark, stony and moist like caves because of Matter, with which the cosmos associates, and because it is 'resistant and fluid' (ἀντίτυπον καὶ ῥευστὸν, *De Antro* 9.6).[46]

In *On the Impassivity of the Bodiless* (*Enn.* 3.6.8.1-3 and 3.6.11.1-3), Plotinus directly quotes from Plato's *Timaeus* 50c4-5: 'τὰ δ' εἰσιόντα καὶ ἐξιόντα τῶν ὄντων μιμήματα: the imitations of beings entering and leaving.' In other words, Matter and things that enter and move out are merely images. In *Ennead* 3.6.7.13, Plotinus also reiterates Plato's *Timaeus* 50c4-5 concerning 'τὰ εἰσιόντα: what

43 See Chapter 2, 'The Cave, Cosmos, and Matter' for the concept '*apeiron*.'

44 O'Brien (1991), 15–25; Gerson (1998), 94–100; Corrigan (2005), 116–9; Remes (2008), 82–4 for a brief discussion of Matter in Plotinus.

45 *Enn.* 3.6.7.25-26, 3.6.9.16ff., 3.6.13.43ff, and 3.6.14.1ff.; Gerson (1998), 97.

46 *Enn.* 2.9.6.1-2 according to Plotinus, ἀντίτυπος is a catchword of the Gnostics, see Edwards (1996), 98.

enters,' expressing in reflection that the thing having come into being is not part of itself, but it is always formed as the phantasm of something else.[47] As Gerson points out, generally, when Plotinus speaks about Matter, he refers to 'unqualified or undesignated matter, not to a particular kind of matter which is a component of a particular kind of thing, such as corporeal matter (*Enn.* 3.5.6.36 and 5.9.6.17).'[48] Plotinus defines it as truly non-being, that is a reflection (εἴδωλον) and a phantasm (φάντασμα) of mass (ὄγκος), bereft of substantial existence (*Enn.* 3.6.7).[49] Matter itself, as only a reflection and phantasm, takes place in the lowest level of Being. First and foremost, Matter does not accept strength from the mind and hence its becoming is entirely deficient in all being. Since Matter is ugly or base in the sense of being ugliness or baseness, it does not participate in order (οὐδ' ἂν μεταλάβοι κόσμου, *Enn.* 3.6.11.28). Likewise, in *Sententia* 20, which is a transcription of *Ennead* 3.6.7.3-27, Porphyry defines Matter in a negative way – it is incorporeal,[50] lifeless, formless, irrational,[51] 'indefinite' (ἄπειρος), impotent, truly not being (μὴ ὄν), a reflection (εἴδωλον)[52] and apparition of mass; because what is primarily in mass is what is impotent. As the desire for existence and stability, but not in fact stable, it always appears to be great and small, less and more, lacking and excessive. It is always becoming and neither remaining nor able to flee; it is a defect of every being.[53]

Plotinus does not fully dismiss the potentiality of Matter's participation in the Forms, and he claims that it is a different kind of participation, only an image of affection. Matter is not deprived of its original character, but it is not excluded from the hierarchical organisation. He explains the connection of the lower stratum with the higher stratum in such a way that the former longs

47 Fleet (1995), 171.

48 Gerson (1998), 95; Corrigan (2005), 116–17.

49 In *Parm.* 164d-e, Plato uses the term mass to designate quantitativeness in which there is indefinite quality; on the other hand, Plotinus places mass with magnitude (μέγεθος) above Matter in the order of Being.

50 Porphyry speaks about the soul, either corporeal or incorporeal, which attracts some corporeal substance in *De Antro* 11.9-10, as we will see later.

51 In *De Antro* 30.1-3, Porphyry refers to *Gorg.* 493d6-494a5 where he likens the soul to a wine jar, of two kinds, beneficial and evil-doing, rational and irrational; in *De Antro* 32.1, he says that the entire cosmos is not the work of irrational chance.

52 It is used for the pneumatic vehicle in *De Antro* and *Sententia* 29, see Chapter 3, 'The Pneumatic Body.'

53 Simonini (2010), 97–101 also refers to *Sententia* 20 and associates the definition of Matter as formless, invisible, dark and idle in the *Chaldean Oracles* (F 163 des Places) with *Tim.* 50c-d and 51a for the denial of Matter as a cosmological principle.

to participate in the higher stratum which is always a model for the lower.[54] The ascending order of substrata, World Body, World Soul, Intellect, One, is found in *Sententia* 30.1-10, in which Porphyry states that they direct themselves towards their generators, the First or God:[55]

> Τῶν μὲν ὅλων καὶ τελείων ὑποστάσεων οὐδεμία πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτῆς γέννημα ἐπέστραπται, πᾶσαι δὲ πρὸς τὰ γεννήσαντά εἰσιν ἀνηγμέναι ἄχρι καὶ τοῦ κοσμικοῦ σώματος· τέλειον γὰρ ὂν ἀνῆκται πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν νοεράν οὖσαν, κύκλῳ διὰ τοῦτο κινούμενον, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν, νοῦς δὲ πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον. διήκει τοίνυν ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐσχάτου ἀρξάμενον καθ' ὅ δύναται ἕκαστον· ἡ πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἀναγωγὴ προσεχῶς μέντοι ἢ πόρρωθεν. διὸ ταῦτα οὐκ ἐφίεσθαι μόνον τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοιτ' ἄν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπολαύειν κατὰ δύναμιν.
>
> Of those hypostases which are universal and perfect, none has its attention turned towards its own offspring, but all direct themselves upwards towards their generators, even down to the body of the cosmos; for it, in its perfection, directs itself towards its soul, which is intellectual, and for this reason performs a circular motion, while its soul directs itself towards the Intellect, and the Intellect towards the First. Each of these entities, then, penetrates as far as this (sc. the First), beginning from the lowest, according to its capacities. The ascent to the First, however, is either immediate or mediated. Hence, these might be said not only to strive for God, but also to enjoy him according to their capacities.

Here, according to the order of the hypostases, Porphyry's statement that the process of ascending to the One is immediate or mediated confirms that the ascent of the material realm towards the One is not direct but mediated. Because of the lowest position of the material world, its participation in the Forms is so weak as to preclude it from being perceived by the mind.[56] As regards the hierarchical relations of the substrata, the darkness of the cave is due to the

54 Emilsson (1988), 19.

55 Trans. Dillon (2010), 32–5 for a discussion of Porphyry's designation of the One as the First or God and his agreement with Plotinus.

56 In his *History of Philosophy* (F 221 Smith = Cyrillus, *Contra Iulianum* 8.271a, 916b3-5), Porphyry goes further and claims that Plato said that the divine substance advances as far as three hypostases, and the divine advances as far as the soul, then matter, which is lower than soul, must, therefore, be 'godless' (ἄθεος), as Chase states that in the time of his studies under Plotinus, Porphyry came close to the Middle Platonic belief that matter is an ungenerated principle, which he rejected before. See Chase (2018), 326–50 for the full discussion. I am grateful to Dr. M. Chase for sharing this paper, 'Porphyry on Matter,' which was also presented at the conference, 'Understanding of Matter,' in Palermo, April 11 2014.

order of the substrata from top to bottom from the intelligible realm towards the material world. Better clarification of the effect of interaction between the substrata on our perception of the cave (or the cosmos) as lovely and dark, some passages in Plotinus' *On the Intellectual Beauty*, may be helpful that offer us a model from the intelligible world of how perception occurs in the sensible world.[57] In *Ennead* 5.8.10.35-44, Plotinus says that those who have gained insight into beauty are no longer external spectators, but their identities are also unified with it. On the other hand, to see the divine as something external is to be outside of it, while to become divine is to be exactly in beauty. According to Plotinus, we cannot have vision, if sight deals with the external but not the divine, and if there is no sense of identification with the object (*Enn.* 5.8.11.19-24). Consequently, it is unlikely that Matter is unified with beauty through Intellect and, thus, for the one penetrating into the divine, or the intelligible realm, Matter, with all its negative features, symbolically Homer's cave, remains the external object of vision and the thing to be seen.

The connection between the intelligible world and Matter through emanation that shows the ontological flows from top to bottom also bears a resemblance to Plotinus' spiritual and personal experiences on the microcosmic level: he identifies himself with the divine, and he would have been disappointed to drop down from light to dark. Plotinus describes emanation by likening the One to the Sun and the other substrata to the rays emanating from it. The power of the Sun's rays seems to decrease whenever they meet Matter. Plotinus' analogy of the Sun and rays also echoes the relation between the One and Being on the level of life, a relation which we can define as a lack of self-identification wherever the subject-object division occurs, as Porphyry discusses in his commentary on the *Parmenides*. However, the reason for the loveliness of the cave can be summarised as follows: the relationship between Matter and the intelligible world through the tendency of Matter towards Good shows a mode of Matter's participation in the Forms. The existence of Matter itself, because of either necessity or otherness in the hierarchical model, also ensures that Matter participates in the Forms, even if this emerges as images of realities.

1.3 *The Mithraic Cave and Mithras as the Maker and Father of All, and as Ruler of* Genesis

This section discusses the mysteries of Mithras and the Mithraic cave which Porphyry presents in *De Antro*,[58] against the backdrop of his other texts,

57 Schroeder (1992), 22–3.

58 See Edwards (1996), 91–4 discusses why Porphyry introduces Mithras here; for example, Porphyry's commending Zoroaster in *De Antro* against the Gnostics who fooled many into

particularly *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, and Origen's *Against Celsus*, and provides iconographical evidence of the mysteries. Next, it examines how mysteries and the doctrines of Pythagoreanism are intertwined through the concept of transmigration of the soul and their dietary restrictions.

Finally, it focuses on the concept of the Demiurge identified with Mithras as the Maker and Father of the cosmos, including Porphyry's appellation of Mithras as the Master of *genesis* (γένεσεως δεσπότης, *De Antro* 24.12-13), in the context of Plato's *Timaeus* and of Numenius' doctrine and the *Chaldean Oracles*.[59] Not only is Numenius the main source of Poryhyry in *De Antro*, but there are also close connections between the fragments of Numenius and the *Oracles*. It is possible that Numenius and the authors of the *Oracles*, the Julians, belonged to same social circle in Apamea[60] and they were almost contemporary. We know Porphyry's interest in the *Oracles* because he was the first to comment on it, and Mithraism and the *Oracles* have some similarities through the Persian religion and the mysteries.[61] Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* will be of assistance in distinguishing between the 'Maker' and the 'Father,' since Porphyry's statement on the identification of Mithras raises the questions of the difference between these two epithets and their association with Mithras.

1.3.1 Preliminary Remarks on Porphyry's Mithraic Cave and the Cult of Mithras

Porphyry presents Zoroaster as a prophet of the cult of Mithras,[62] and also an inspirational figure for others to worship the gods dwelling in heaven, earth and in sanctuaries of the underworld:

> (6.8–20) Οὕτω καὶ Πέρσαι τὴν εἰς κάτω κάθοδον τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ πάλιν ἔξοδον μυσταγωγοῦντες τελοῦσι τὸν μύστην, ἐπονομάσαντες σπήλαιον ≤τὸν≥ τόπον·

using the book of Zoroaster which is spurious (*VPlot* 16), or fathered their belief upon the cult of Mithras. See also Edwards (1990c), 71.

59 It is a poem of the second century C.E. in Greek dactylic hexameters believed to have been written by a certain Julian the Theurgist and his son, Julian the Chaldaean. See Finamore (2010), 161–2.

60 Athanassiadi (1999), 153–6; Finamore (2010), 163 n. 9.

61 Lewy (1956), 399–441.

62 Mitra (Sanskrit, *Mitrá-*, *Mitráḥ*), a deity who appears frequently in the ancient Indian text of the *Rigveda*. Mithra (Avestan, *Miθra-*, *Miθrō*), a *yazata* (one of a group of divinities in Mazdaism and Zoroastrianism) mentioned in the Zoroastrian sacred scripture of the Avesta, whose modern Persian equivalent is Mehr. Mithras, the principal deity of the religion of Mithraism, was derived from a form of Mithraism that had been reinterpreted and considerably changed in Greco-Roman culture.

> πρώτου μέν, ὡς ἔφη Εὔβουλος, Ζωροάστρου αὐτοφυὲς σπήλαιον ἐν τοῖς πλησίον ὄρεσι τῆς Περσίδος ἀνθηρὸν καὶ πηγὰς ἔχον ἀνιερώσαντος εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ πάντων ποιητοῦ καὶ πατρὸς Μίθρου, εἰκόνα φέροντος αὐτῷ τοῦ σπηλαίου τοῦ κόσμου, ὃν ὁ Μίθρας ἐδημιούργησε, τῶν δ' ἐντὸς κατὰ συμμέτρους ἀποστάσεις σύμβολα φερόντων τῶν κοσμικῶν στοιχείων καὶ κλιμάτων· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον τὸν Ζωροάστρην κρατήσαντος καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις, δι' ἄντρων καὶ σπηλαίων εἴτ' οὖν αὐτοφυῶν εἴτε χειροποιήτων τὰς τελετὰς ἀποδιδόναι. ὡς γὰρ τοῖς μὲν Ὀλυμπίοις θεοῖς ναούς τε καὶ ἕδη καὶ βωμοὺς ἱδρύσαντο, χθονίοις δὲ καὶ ἥρωσιν ἐσχάρας, ὑποχθονίοις δὲ βόθρους καὶ μέγαρα, οὕτω καὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἄντρα τε καὶ σπήλαια.
>
> (6.8–20) In this way the Persians also perfect the initiate by initiating him into the mystery of the descent of the souls and their return, calling the place a cave.[63] As Eubulus says, Zoroaster was the first to dedicate a natural cavern in the nearby mountains of Persia, having flowers and streams, in honour of Mithras, the maker and father of all. The cavern represented for him an image of the cosmos which Mithras created; the things in the cave were in accordance with symmetrical distances, conveying symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos. Then, after this Zoroaster, there also took hold among others the tradition of expounding the mystic rites through caves and caverns, either naturally formed or human-made. Just as they dedicated shrines, statues and altars to the Olympian gods, sacrificial hearths to chthonic deities and heroes, trenches and sacred pits to subterranean gods, in such a way they dedicated both caves and caverns to the cosmos.

In various passages of the treatise (*De Antro* 6, 17, 20, and 24), Porphyry directly refers to Mithras, which has drawn the attention of scholars of Mithraism as one of the rare relevant literary texts other than some inscriptions. Most authors who mention the cult are Christians, belittling it; pagan sources tend to be late and ill-informed; both provide much misleading information about the cult when compared with the iconographical evidence. The earliest ancient literary text, Statius' *Thebaid*, which is a Latin epic poem, dates back to the first century C.E., alluding to Mithras as twisting the horns of a disobedient bull beneath the rocks of a Persian cave (*Thebaid* 1.719-720). Statius' source of information is not known, but Mithras was mainly depicted in the tauroctony, the bull-slaying scene, as holding the bull by its nostrils.[64] It is generally accepted

63 Beck (2006), 41–2 discusses the translation of μυσταγωγοῦντες.

64 Beck (1998), 119 n. 29.

that Plutarch's *Life of Pompey* 24 is a more significant text; it provides a clue for the possible diffusion of the cult in the West, stating that the Cilician pirates practised secret rites for Mithras at the Lycian Mount Olympus in c. 68 B.C.E.[65] However, Plutarch does not say that the Cilician pirates conveyed their rites to foreign lands; on the contrary, they maintained their worship in Cilicia.

De Antro fills the lack of ancient literary texts to a certain extent. As we read it, thanks to the Neopythagoreans, Numenius and Cronius, we can conclude that Porphyry has been well informed about the cult of Mithras, its cosmology and the symbols in the tauroctony, which is in fact a celestial map. Porphyry rightly states that all *mithraea* are caves, which also signify the image of the cosmos in accordance with the ancient figure of the 'cave as universe.'[66] According to the evidence provided by Porphyry and his sources, we are assured that their information on the *mithraeum* is credible, although the iconography shows varieties[67] – on the other hand, we cannot disregard the view that Porphyry (and Eubulus) offer their own Platonising interpretation of scraps of information picked up at second or third hand about the mysteries.

Indeed, some *mithraea* were located in natural caves and some were built similar to natural caves, as Porphyry informs us (ἄντρων καὶ σπηλαίων εἴτ' οὖν αὐτοφυῶν εἴτε χειροποιήτων, *De Antro* 6.17). We also learn from Porphyry that the prototypical *mithraeum* was situated in the mountains in Persia and had flowers and streams, but we have no adequate evidence for its actual location (*De Antro* 6.10–12);[68] indeed, Zoroaster' primal *mithraeum* is a pure fantasy. Porphyry interprets the *mithraeum* as an image of the cosmos, with symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos (σύμβολα φερόντων τῶν κοσμικῶν στοιχείων καὶ κλιμάτων, *De Antro* 6.15), and he also mentions the signs of the zodiacs, planetary houses, solstices and equinoxes in the subsequent sections of the treatise that we will discuss later.

Eubulus, one of Porphyry's main sources, the author of a history of Mithras in voluminous books, the lost *περὶ τοῦ Μίθρα*;[69] assigned the 'institutionalisation' of Mithraism to Zoroaster (*De Antro* 6.10–13). In his *De Abstinentia* (4.16),

65 Ibid., 121 n. 38.

66 Beck (2006), 105–6.

67 Clauss (2000), 42; Beck (1994), 106–7, (2000a), 158–9 and 177–9, (2006), 45 and 103–16. Particularly the *Sette Sfere mithraeum* (The Mithraeum of Seven Spheres) in Ostia, *V239-49* which Beck calls the 'ideal *mithraeum*.'

68 Clauss (2000), 68 fig. 28= *V2280*.

69 *De Abstinentia* 4.16; Turcan (1975), 23–43; Dillon (1977), 81 suggests that Porphyry might be quoting Eubulus through another source that is not Numenius as Turcan claims; Clark (2000), 187–8 n. 634; Simonini (2010), 101–3 follows Turcan.

basing himself on Eubulus, Porphyry speaks of the division of Magi into three categories among the Persians: the members of the first group, who are also the 'most learned' (λογιώτατοι), do not eat and kill any animal (ἔμψυχον) and are faithful to the ancient abstinence from eating animals.[70] Those of the second group use animals, but do not kill any of the tame animals; those of the last group do not eat all animals. Porphyry states that this is because of their belief that the 'transmigration of souls' (μετεμψύχωσις) was of the first importance.[71] Porphyry also uses the term μεταμόρφωσις in *De Abstinentia* 1.6.14, which implies a transformation of shape while maintaining consciousness, as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[72] Porphyry does not offer a comprehensive explanation[73] of the transmigration of souls, and this seems to be particularly important in the mysteries, as well as in the doctrine of the Pythagoreans. In his *Life of Pythagoras* (*VP* 19.8-12), Porphyry enunciates the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls, saying that Pythagoras taught that the soul is immortal. Through transmigrating, it changes (μεταβάλλουσαν) into other kinds of animated lives. He proposes that, after a period of time, whoever once lived and died is born again, and so nothing is absolutely new.

Iamblichus uses the term transmigration of souls (μετεμψυχώσεις, 52.12) once in *the Theology of Arithmetic*[74] and refers to the Pythagoreans such as Androcydes (possibly late fourth century B.C.E.), who wrote on Pythagorean symbols,[75] Eubulides, Aristoxenus (fourth century B.C.E.) – he was a pupil of Aristotle, Hippobotus (late third century B.C.E.) and Neanthes (third century B.C.E.). All these recorded Pythagoras' deeds, saying that the transmigrations of souls, such as those experienced by Pythagoras, occurred at 216-year intervals. Albeit rather rarely, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus[76] do refer to the

70 Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 2.14; Clark (2000), 112 n. 635. See also de Jong (1997), 395 for a brief discussion of this passage; (1997), 387–404 for the full discussion of the Magi in Graeco-Roman tradition.

71 Pherekydes of Syros, the teacher of Pythagoras, was thought to be the first to have given an account of metempsychosis, F 2 Suda = A 2; see also Schibli (1990), 104–5 and 140–1. Porphyry refers to Pherekydes in *De Antro* 31.

72 In 31 B 117 DK, Empedocles says that he have already been a boy and a girl and a bush and a bird and a fish leaping out of the sea. See also Clark (2000), 125 n. 29.

73 Olympiodorus of Alexandria (c. 500–70), in his *Commentary on Plato's Phaedo* (*In Phaedonem* 9.6.3-6), says that μετενσωμάτωσις is the correct word for the transmigration of souls, which signifies that only one soul is covered with different bodies. See Burkert (1985), 299–301 on the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines of metempsychosis.

74 See also Waterfield (1988), 84 for translation.

75 Iamb., *VP* 28.145; Burkert (1972), 167–75; Struck (2004), 98.

76 *In Remp.* 2.340.21-23 Kroll.

Pythagoreans in their doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and this transmigration implies the immortality of soul.[77]

If we accept Porphyry's assertions that, according to Eubulus' classification, the Magi did not kill or eat animals, except possibly in sacrifices, and, if we accept that they believed in the transmigration of souls and divulged it to the initiates in the mysteries of Mithras, it is plausible to infer that Porphyry links Pythagoreanism to the mysteries of Mithras. At least we may conclude that the Mithraists adopted one of the characteristics of the Pythagorean way of life.[78] On the other hand, it is unsafe to trace the emphasis on dietary restrictions generated from the teachings of Pythagoras through the Magi or Pythagoras himself. Regarding those assertions, we can find a connection between the Magi and Pythagoras in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* (*VP* 41.1-5)[79] in which he writes that Pythagoras learned from the Magi:

> Τοιαῦτα παρῄνει· μάλιστα δ' ἀληθεύειν· τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον δύνασθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιεῖν θεῷ παραπλησίους. ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς παρὰ τῶν μάγων ἐπυνθάνετο, ὃν Ὡρομάζην καλοῦσιν ἐκεῖνοι, ἐοικέναι τὸ μὲν σῶμα φωτί, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἀληθείᾳ.
>
> He used to recommend such things, but first and foremost to speak the truth; for this alone is able to make men nearly equal to god. Since as he learned from the Magi that the body of the God, whom they call the god Horomazes,[80] resembles light, but his soul truth.

In his *Life of Pythagoras* (*VP* 4.19), Iamblichus, likewise, mentions that Pythagoras spent time with the Magi in Babylon and was throughly trained in the divine things there, obtained the most perfect knowledge of the ritual of gods and reached the highest level of knowledge about their numbers, music and other mathematical sciences. Porphyry and Iamblichus present the Magi as

77 Plotinus, on the other hand, uses μετενσωμάτωσις in *Enn*. 2.9.6.13 for 'changing from body to body' and μετενσωματόομαι in *Enn*. 1.1.12.4 for 'passing from body to body' and in *Enn*. 4.3.9.5 for 'soul present in body by change from one frame to another,' trans. MacKenna. See also Empedocles, 31 B 31.6 DK (= Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 1.3.6; D. 558, W. 9) where 'μετενσωματώσει' shows belief in transmigration of souls into animals and 31 B 137 DK (= Orig., *Cont. Cels*. 5.49) 'ψυχῆς μετενσωματουμένης.'

78 Burkert (1985), 301–4.

79 de Jong (1997), 255–6 for the analysis of the passage.

80 See Plut., *De Iside* 369e: 'Zoroaster the Magos used to call the one Horomazes and the other Areimanius, and also showed that the former was especially akin, among objects of perception, to light (φωτί), and the latter, on the contrary, to darkness and ignorance,' trans. Griffiths.

Pythagoras' masters, and their rituals and disciplines as primary sources for Pythagoreanism.

Elsewhere in his *Life of Pythagoras*, however, Porphyry also claims that Pythagoras learned the mathematical sciences from the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Phoenicians. The ancient Egyptians are engaged in geometry, the Phoenicians in numbers and calculations, and the Chaldeans in theorems of astronomy; Pythagoras is said to have learned and received from the Magi the rituals of the gods and the ways of life (*VP* 6). Iamblichus says that Pythagoras synthesised his system of divine wisdom and worship with the knowledge that he learned from the Orphics, the Egyptian priests, the Chaldeans and the Magi, from observing the initiation rites at Eleusis; he was in Imbros, Samothrace and Lemnos, gained further knowledge from the common rites, from the Celts and from Iberia.[81]

Although there is not such an explicit association, we can consider *De Abstinentia* and *De Antro* as complementary to each other on the subject of the mysteries of Mithras with the assimilation of the mysteries of Mithras to Pythagoreanism (*De Abstinentia* 4.16). This proposal can be summarised as follows: Porphyry's statement in *De Antro* 6.15-16 and 6.20-21, whereby Zoroaster is the founder of the mysteries of Mithras, and, after him, his followers continued their mystic rites in caves, is compatible with his description of the Magi, who are wise regarding divinity and worship the divine according to *De Abstinentia* 4.16.1-2.[82] Porphyry's quotation from Eubulus' history of Mithras in *De Abstinentia,* whereby the Magi abstained from killing animals, refers to certain dietary restrictions of the Pythagoreans. According to the reports, both in Porphyry's and Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras*, as discussed above, Pythagoras can also be thought of as having learned from the Magi and having adapted certain rituals of theirs and their way of life.

In *De Antro* 6, Porphyry reveals a number of significant points on Mithraism.[83] The *mithraeum*, either a naturally formed or human-made cave or cavern, represents the universe for the Mithraists; in other words, the *mithraeum*/cave is a compact replica of the cosmos. In contrast to the image of the Platonic cave in *Republic* 7 as the inferior part of the world, the Mithraic cave is the entire image of the physical cosmos, with the vault of heaven. For the Mithraists, the cave is a place of salvation, whereas the Platonic cave symbolises a place of deception, slavery and ignorance, a place to be avoided. The Mithraic cave functions as a place where the neophytes are initiated into the

81 *VP* 28.151; Clark (1989), 66–7 n. 151; de Jong (1997), 402.

82 See de Jong (1997), 400 for the use of the designation 'Magi' in philosophical texts.

83 Beck (2006), 17 and 41–4.

mysteries of the god (*De Antro* 6.8-9). In his *De Corona Militis* (15.3), Tertullian (160–225 C.E.) also affirms that the follower is received in a *spelaeum in castra tenebrarum*, and so he calls the initiate *Mithrae miles*.

As he describes the 'initiation' (μυσταγωγοῦντες, *De Antro* 6.9) of the candidate into the mystery of the descent of the souls (κάτω κάθοδον, *De Antro* 6.8) and their return (πάλιν ἔξοδον, *De Antro* 6.9), Porphyry hints that, in the ritual of initiation, the initiates have received some verbal instructions, along with ritually re-enacting their death and rebirth.[84] Porphyry further reports on the initiation ritual of the mysteries in *De Abstinentia* 4.16 and *De Antro* 15.25-30. In *De Abstinentia,* the male initiates who participate in secret rites are called lions, the 'women lionesses/hyenas'[85] and those who are servants, ravens. In order to relate honey with at least one of the Mithraic grades, Porphyry states that, after the hands of the lion have been purged by honey, it is recommended that they keep the hands clean from everything painful, mischievous and defiled (*De Antro* 15.9-16.1). They also purify the tongue from everything erroneous with honey. As Gordon rightly observes, honey is equated with moral purity in the initiary ritual of the grade Leo, and he states that the three words used by Porphyry, λυπερόν, βλαπτικόν and μυσαρόν, had moral connotations.[86]

The *mithraeum* contains symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos (*De Antro* 6.19-20) as Cumont states that symbolism connected with the stars is the characteristic of Mithraism: 'the signs of the zodiac, the symbols of the planets, the emblems of elements, appear time after time on the bas-reliefs, mosaics, and paintings of their subterranean temples.'[87] The phrase 'symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos' (σύμβολα τῶν κοσμικῶν στοιχείων

84 Gordon (1980), 22–4 for a discussion of the mysteries' use of pretence in the ritual; Beck (2006), 42–3.

85 On the exclusion of women in the mysteries see Gordon (1980), 42–64 as he refers to *De Abstinentia* 4.16 on pp. 58–61; cf. on the involvement of women in the mysteries see David (2000), 121–41; Clark (2000), 188 n. 637: 'This passage seems to show that Mithraism was not an all-male cult, and some editors (including Nauck) and commentators emend *huaina*, hyena, to *leaina*, lioness, a female version of the rank 'lion.' If women ever were admitted to the cult, 'hyena' might be appropriate, because hyenas were believed to change sex: Aelian, 1.25. But the few inscriptions which mention women may show only an association with the cult, and Gordon argues that women were excluded by a Mithraic ideology of male purity (reinforced by a general belief that ravens do not have sexual intercourse in summer, and lions do not at any time) and by being identified with hyenas, who are unclean in their sexual and eating habits and deprive men of reason (Pliny, *Natural History* 28.92).'

86 Gordon (1980), 40–2.

87 Cumont (1912), 51; Ulansey (1991), 16.

καὶ κλιμάτων, *De Antro* 6.15) also occurs in Origen's *Contra Celsum* 6.22, a 'ladder with seven gates' (κλῖμαξ ἑπτάπυλος) and an eighth gate at its top:[88]

> Ἐξῆς δὲ τούτοις βουλόμενος ὁ Κέλσος πολυμάθειαν ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιδείξασθαι ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμῶν λόγῳ ἐκτίθεταί τινα καὶ περσικὰ μυστήρια ἐν οἷς φησιν· Αἰνίττεται ταῦτα καὶ ὁ Περσῶν λόγος, καὶ ἡ τοῦ Μίθρου τελετή, ≤ἥ≥ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐστιν. Ἔστι γάρ τι ἐν αὐτῇ σύμβολον τῶν δύο τῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ περιόδων, τῆς τε ἀπλανοῦς καὶ τῆς εἰς τοὺς πλανήτας αὖ νενεμημένης, καὶ τῆς δι' αὐτῶν τῆς ψυχῆς διεξόδου. Τοιόνδε τὸ σύμβολον· κλῖμαξ ἑπτάπυλος, ἐπὶ δ' αὐτῇ πύλη ὀγδόη.
>
> After this, from a desire to parade his erudition in his attack on us Celsus also describes some Persian mysteries, where he says: These truths are obscurely represented by the teaching of the Persians and by the mysteries of Mithras which is of Persian origin. For in the latter there is a symbol of two orbits in heaven, the one being that of the fixed stars and the other that assigned to the planets, and of the soul's passage through these. The symbol is this. It is a ladder with seven gates with at its top an eighth gate.

According to Beck, this passage confirms that the mysteries had a doctrine of the soul's journey through and out of the heavens, namely through the seven spheres of planets and the spheres of the fixed stars.[89] The symbol of the ladder refers to the former, the counterparts of the seven grades of initiation into the mysteries (Corvus, Nymphus, Miles, Leo, Perses, Heliodromus, Pater),[90] and to the latter as the eighth gate placed at the top of the ladder, which is also a Platonic echo of the seven planets and fixed stars in *Timaeus* 34a (καὶ ἀπλανὲς [...] ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν περίοδον). The evidence from the *Mithraeum of Felicissimus* at Ostia Antica, a second century floor mosaic (*CIMRM* 299), and *Santa Prisca Mithraeum* (*CIMRM* 476) iconographically support the pathway through the planets and the seven initiatory grades of the mysteries.[91]

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88 Trans. Chadwick (1980), 334 with minor changes; see Edwards (1990c), 71, on the ladder, says: 'For Celsus (Orig., *Cont. Cels.* 6.22-23) it is both Mithraic and Gnostic, while Numenius may also have ascribed it to the mystagogues of Iran, (F 60 des Places = *De Antro* 6.13-23).'

89 Beck (1988), 73–84 (Chapter VIII) for a detailed discussion of the passage, including comparison of the use of planetary orders in the Mysteries, *the Oracles*, etc.

90 Burkert (1987), 83–4.

91 See also Jerome, *Letter* 107 (*ad Laetam*); Beck (1988),74–5; Ulansey (1991), 19; Turcan (1996), 229–30; Clauss (2000), 132–3. For Celsus' identification of the Mithraic sequence of the planets with Pythagorean musical theory, see Chadwick (1980), 335 n. 2.

Origen does not explain the dichotomisation of the soul's journey, apart from mentioning a material object, a ladder, as symbol of the Mithraic ritual, but *De Antro* 6 explicitly states that the soul's journey is dichotomous, a downward path of the souls and their return upwards.[92] Porphyry associates the descent of the soul (γένεσις) and its ascent (ἀπογένεσις) with the spheres of the fixed stars and the seven planets (ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀπλανους ἢ διὰ τῆς τῶν πεπλανημένων), particularly in *De Antro* 29. In this regard, the downward path signifies the way of *genesis* into mortality and the upward path is the way of *apogenesis* into immortality. In *De Abstinentia* 4.16, Porphyry continues to add some details on the mysteries through the voice of Pallas,[93] who is another shadowy figure, when he states that the initiate who receives the rank of lion[94] puts on every shape of animals (*De Abstinentia* 4.16.16-28):[95]

> τὴν γὰρ κοινότητα ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς τὰ ζῷα αἰνιττόμενοι διὰ τῶν ζῴων ἡμᾶς μηνύειν εἰώθασιν· ὡς τοὺς μὲν μετέχοντας τῶν αὐτῶν ὀργίων μύστας λέοντας καλεῖν, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας λεαίνας, τοὺς δὲ ὑπηρετοῦντας κόρακας. ἐπί τε τῶν πατέρων [...] ἀετοὶ γὰρ καὶ ἱέρακες οὗτοι προσαγορεύονται. ὅ τε τὰ λεοντικὰ παραλαμβάνων περιτίθεται παντοδαπὰς ζῴων μορφάς· ὧν τὴν αἰτίαν ἀποδιδοὺς Πάλλας ἐν τοῖς περὶ τοῦ Μίθρα τὴν κοινὴν φησὶ φορὰν οἴεσθαι, ὡς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ζωδιακοῦ κύκλου ἀποτείνειν· τὴν δὲ ἀληθινὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ ἀκριβῆ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν αἰνίττεσθαι, ἃς παντοδαποῖς περιέχεσθαι σώμασι λέγουσι.
>
> They symbolise our community with animals by giving us the names of animals: thus initiates who take part in their rites are called lions, and women lionesses/hyenas, and servants ravens. In the case of Fathers [lacuna] for they call them eagles and falcons. The man who attains leonine rank puts on all kinds of animal forms. Pallas, explaining the reason for this in his books on Mithras, says the general tendency of opinion is that it alludes to the circuit of the zodiac, but the true and exact explanation is an allegory of human souls which, they say, put on every kind of bodies.

This passage possibly suggests that the initiates were disguised as animal shapes, possibly as ravens for the first grade, lions for the male initiates, lionesses/hyenas for the female ones. We also know from the iconography that the bull-slaying scene usually includes a dog, a snake or serpent, a raven and a

92 Beck (2006), 83–4.
93 Pallas *De Abstinentia* 2.56.3; Clark (2000), 161 n. 360.
94 τὰ λεοντικὰ is also found in *De Antro* 15.9.
95 Trans. Clark (2000), 112 with minor changes.

scorpion. For example, the tauroctony in Nida, Heddernheim (*CIMRM* 1083) has the scene of Mithras as a bull-killer, a raven sits on the cloak of Mithras, a dog with a collar jumps up at the bull and a scorpion grips the bull's genitals. Another example is the white marble relief in Walbrook, London (*CIMRM* 810), depicting Mithras as a bull-killer; the dog and the serpent are near the wound of the bull, the scorpion at its genitals, but part of the god's cloak with the raven is missing. Both tauroctonies not only have the same elements, but are also surrounded by the zodiac, to which Pallas probably alluded. The last example is called the Konjic banquet scene in Konjica, Bosnia (*CIMRM* 1896), on which the Raven and Lion, both wearing the masks of their grade, serve food and drink.

Porphyry hints that the symbols of the animals, which are put on by the initiates in their secret rites, represent the transmigration of souls into different bodies. It seems that the Mithraists would experience their bodily death and rebirth at every grade of the initiation. Moreover, the rank of Leo must be a crucial grade for the initiates.[96] *De Antro* 15.9–16.1 suggests that this rank may be the threshold of moving from the *genesis* associated with wetness through the *apogenesis* associated with dryness by means of honey, as Porphyry says that it is a fiery liquid inimical to water. Here, Porphyry, yet again, emphasises the symbolic language of the mysteries and proposes the association of Mithraic symbols with the zodiac in *De Antro* 24.

1.3.2 Mithras as the Maker and Father of All, and as the Ruler of *Genesis*

The epithet of Mithras as 'the Maker and Father of all' (τοῦ πάντων ποιητοῦ καὶ πατρὸς Μίθρου, *De Antro* 6.12-13) comes from Porphyry's identification of Mithras as the demiurgic god (ὃν ὁ Μίθρας ἐδημιούργησε, *De Antro* 6.13-14). This section examines this identification in relation to Plato's *Timaeus*, Porphyry's and Proclus' commentaries on the dialogue, Numenius, and the *Chaldean Oracles*. In this context, Numenius F 17 des Places (= F 26 Leemans) and F 7 des Places of the *Oracles* are important in validating Porphyry's identification of Mithras with the Demiurge.

96 See Gordon (1980), 32–6 for the importance of the grade Leo in the Mysteries and the relation between Egyptian beliefs and those of the Mysteries; Beck (1988), 31 discusses the planetary gods and the grade order of the cult on the Bologno Relief (*CIMRM* 693), saying: 'The emphasis on Jupiter in the expressed sequence would thus serve to prompt a recollection of that other most germane of orders in which Jupiter also stands at the centre, and would incidentally acknowledge the centrality of the grade over which Jupiter presides, the Lions who are the first true "participants" (μετέχοντες) of the Mysteries (*De Abstinentia* 4.16).'

Before beginning the discussion, it should be noted that, in *De Iside* 369e, Plutarch depicts Mithras as 'the mediator' (ὁ μεσίτης, *De Iside* 369.e5) between Horomazes or Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity, associated with light, and Areimanius, who is the principle of darkness and ignorance.[97] Plutarch includes Mithras in the old Persian religious system with its two opposite elements, as the god is seen by the Persians as a mediating power. Porphyry further identifies him as the Maker and Father of all and the Demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* (*Tim*. 28a). Timaeus uses the phrase 'the Maker and Father of this cosmos' (ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς, *Tim.* 28c) for the Demiurge.[98] Elsewhere in the *Timaeus,* Plato's Demiurge also says, 'I am Demiurge and Father of these works' (ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε ἔργων, *Tim.* 41a) when he addresses the inferior gods. In *De Antro* 6, Porphyry does not directly use the epithet 'Demiurge' for Mithras; instead, he says that Mithras creates the cosmos. The use of the title 'Demiurge' with the epithet 'the master or the ruler of *genesis*' for Mithras occurs in *De Antro* 24.12-13 (δημιουργὸς δὲ ὢν ὁ Μίθρας καὶ γενέσεως δεσπότης). These identifications of Mithras by Porphyry are compatible with the Mithraic iconography, as Mithras is represented as the ruler of the cosmos, naked, carrying a globe and supporting a circle with six signs of the zodiac in his right hand (*CIMRM* 985), and he is also depicted as Atlas on bended knees and carrying a large globe on his shoulders (*CIMRM* 1283).

In the *Timaeus,* Plato is the first to introduce the concept of the Demiurge as the origin or the cause (τό αἴτιον) of the universe.[99] The demiurge forms the universe according to 'a model' (τό παράδειγμα). This model of the universe is eternal and changeless, that is to say, it is always 'being,' and grasped through a rational account (*Tim.* 29a). On the other hand, the actual universe created by the Demiurge is 'an image of something' (τόνδε τὸν κόσμον εἰκόνα τινὸς εἶναι, *Tim.* 29b); it is 'becoming,' grasped through opinions, including 'irrational sense-perceptions' (μετ' αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου, *Tim.* 28a1-2). Plato uses the word ἡ εἰκών,[100] 'the image' for the cosmos formed after the eternal model. Likewise Porphyry describes the cosmos created by Mithras as an 'image' (εἰκόνα, *De Antro* 6.18); in this instance, however, the Mithraic cave is the materialisation of

97 See Yt. 10.7,24,35,45,60,82,91,107,117,141 for the various functions of Mithra; Yt. 10.12-13,118,142 for worship of Mithra as a solar deity; Yt. 10.97 for Mithra as the enemy of long-handed procrastination; Yt. 10.26 for Mithra as a defender with the Sun against evil gods. See de Jong (1997), 171–7 for the analysis of this passage about Mithras.

98 'Father' is used only once in *Tim*. 37c7.

99 Plato uses three main terms to refer to the universe, οὐρανός (heaven or heavens, *Tim*. 28b, 36e, 47b, etc.), κόσμος (world or world order, *Tim*. 27a, 29e, 31b, etc.) and τὸ πᾶν (the universe or the whole, *Tim*. 28c and 30b), see also Zeyl (2000), 14 n. 16.

100 Plato also uses it in *Tim*. 29b2-3, 29c2, and 37d7.

the cosmos, the place where the Mithraists worshipped and sought the salvation of their souls.

In order to demonstrate how Numenius uses the concepts of Father and Maker in his cosmological model, let us now start with the discussion of his ontological principles, as preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (*In Tim*. 1.303.27-304.5 Diehl = F 21 des Places = Test. 24 Leemans):[101]

> Νουμήνιος μὲν γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνυμνήσας θεοὺς πατέρα μὲν καλεῖ τὸν πρῶτον, ποιητὴν δὲ τὸν δεύτερον, ποίημα δὲ τὸν τρίτον· ὁ γὰρ κόσμος κατ' αὐτὸν ὁ τρίτος ἐστὶ θεός·ὥστε ὁ κατ' αὐτὸν δημιουργὸς διττός, ὅ τε πρῶτος θεὸς καὶ ὁ δεύτερος, τὸ δὲ δημιουργούμενον ὁ τρίτος.
>
> Numenius proclaims three gods: he calls the first 'Father' (πατέρα), the second 'Maker' (ποιητὴν), the third 'Work' (ποίημα); for the cosmos is, according to him the third god. And so, the Demiurge is double in his view, being both the first and the second god, the third god is the creation.

According to Proclus' report, Numenius assigns the demiurgic activity to the second and third gods as the Maker and the Work, rather than the first and second god, as participating in the demiurgic activities. Numenius explains that the first god, dwelling in himself, is simple and undivisible because of its sufficiency in himself (F 11 des Places = F 20 Leemans).[102] On the other hand, the second and third gods are actually one; the second god's or the Demiurge's engagement with matter results in giving unity to it for the creation of the physical world.[103] As a result of this activity, Matter divides the Demiurge, which 'becomes unregarding of himself' (ἀπερίοπτος ἑαυτοῦ γίγνεται, F 11.18-19 des Places) because the Demiurge is not in contact with the intelligible but looks at Matter. The third god emerges from the second after the interaction between the second god and Matter. As Dillon states, the third god is seemingly an immanent World Soul, although there is not a clear distinction between the second and third gods.[104]

The first god as the Father of the creating divinity or the second god (τὸν πρῶτον καὶ τοῦ δημιουργοῦντος δὲ θεοῦ [...] πατέρα τὸν πρῶτον θεόν, F 12 des Places = F 21 Leemans) is free from all activities and is King, while the demi-

101 On this fragment see Dillon (1996b), 366–7 and (2007b), 400; Runia (2008), 158–9 with n. 615.

102 Dillon (1996b), 367–8.

103 Dillon (2007b), 400.

104 Dillon (1996b), 367 and (2000), 341 with n. 8.

urgic god is in authority as he proceeds through the heaven. Numenius' description of the demiurgic god reminds us of Zeus in *Phaedrus* 246e, who is the great leader in heaven, driving a winged chariot, arranging and taking care of all things.[105] The first god is described as alone, 'Good itself' (αὐτοαγαθόν) and the principle of being as Intellect, while the demiurgic god is the principle of becoming and the imitator of Good (F 16 des Places = F 25 Leemans). This demiurgic god is good through his participation of Good or the first god. Numenius' first and second gods reflect the basic doctrines of the *Timaeus* and the doctrine of Good in *Republic* 6.[106] Numenius compares the first god and the demiurge to a 'farmer' (γεωργῷ) and 'sower' (φυτεύοντα).[107] The first god sows (σπείρει)[108] the seed of every soul into the whole thing which has a share of it. The second god, the demiurge, plants and distributes and transplants in each of us what has been sowed. Mithras simply takes the place of the second god in Numenius' ontological system of principles.

Porphyry, however, follows Plato and uses the epithet 'Maker and Father' in the same way as Plato, as denoting the one who creates the cosmos, whereas the Father and the Maker are ontologically distinguished from each other in Numenius. Proclus explains how the Father and the Maker differ with respect to each other in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* (*In Tim.* 1.299.23-300 Diehl) and refers to Porphyry's commentary on the dialogue (F 40 Sodano = *In Tim.* 1.300.1-6 Diehl). Proclus' reference to Porphyry shows that this variation was an issue in his time (*In Tim.* 1.300.1-13 Diehl):

> Πορφύριος δέ φησιν, ὅτι πατὴρ μέν ἐστιν ὁ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ γεννῶν τὸ ὅλον, ποιητὴς δὲ ὁ παρ' ἄλλου τὴν ὕλην λαμβάνων· ὅθεν καὶ πατὴρ μὲν Ἀρίστων λέγεται Πλάτωνος ὡς ὅλου αἴτιος, ποιητὴς δὲ ὁ οἰκοδόμος τῆς οἰκίας ὡς οὐκ αὐτὸς τὴν ὕλην γεννῶν. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο ἀληθές, δῆλον ὡς οὐκ ἔδει πατέρα λέγειν τὸν δημιουργόν, οὐχ ὑφιστάντα κατὰ τὸν Τίμαιον τὴν ὕλην· οὐ γὰρ λέγει τοῦτο σαφῶς; μήποτε οὖν ὡς μὲν εἰδοποιὸς μᾶλλόν ἐστι ποιητής· καὶ γὰρ ποιεῖν φαμεν πάντας τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναί τι παράγοντας· ὡς δὲ μετὰ ζωῆς παράγων ἃ παράγει, πατήρ· ζῴων γάρ εἰσιν οἱ πατέρες αἴτιοι καὶ ζώντων τινῶν καὶ προετικοὶ σπερμάτων μετὰ ζωῆς. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τοιοῦτον.
>
> Porphyry says that Father is that which generates the whole from himself; Maker is he who receives the matter from someone else. Hence Ariston

105 Dillon (2007b), 399.
106 Dillon (1996b), 369 and (2007b), 399.
107 F 13 des Places = F 22 Leemans.
108 *Tim.* 41e: the Demiurge has sown (σπαρείσας) each of the souls into instruments of time.

> is called Plato's father as being the cause of the whole, on the other hand the builder of the house is called the maker because he himself does not generate the matter of it. If this is true, it is obvious that he (Plato) should not have called the demiurge father, because he does not create the matter in *Timaeus*. For does he not clearly say this. Perhaps, then, maker is more shaper of form; because we also call 'makers' all people who bring something from not being into being. And by virtue of creating what he creates with life, he is father. For fathers are the origin of living beings and they are generators of the seeds which contain life. So much, then, for this subject.

In this passage, Proclus criticises Porphyry on the grounds that he should not have called the Demiurge the Father since the Demiurge is not the cause of the existence of Matter.[109] Proclus' criticism is obviously based on the fact that the Demiurge does not create the cosmos out of nothing, but brings it from the state of chaos into the state of the best possible copy of the eternal and changeless model (*Tim.* 30a). Proclus then suggests that 'Maker' is considered as the creator of form (εἰδοποιός), while 'Father' is the cause of living things and of anything alive. There is not an apparent contradiction between Porphyry's definition of Father and Maker and Plato's Demiurge because, here, Porphyry merely emphasises the Maker's creation of a house (or the cosmos) from existent Matter. The Maker shows the demiurgic aspect of the god and the Father his other aspect as source of living beings, the life-giver. The Maker builds the house as the Demiurge shapes the cosmos; he is in charge of putting the cosmos in order in the *Timaeus*, whereas the Father, as the cause of the universe,[110] has the general sense of the Demiurge in Plato's dialogue. Porphyry's analogy recalls the analogy of Numenius in F 13 des Places (= F 22 Leemans) whereby the first god, the Father as the farmer, is a supplier or provider, while the second, the Demiurge as sower, is the user of what is provided to grow the products.

It is now time to look into Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* in more detail and to discuss its basis for distinctions between 'the Maker' and 'the Father' (*In Tim.* 1.311.28-312.9 Diehl).[111] Proclus argues that 'Father' and 'Maker' imply extremes because the former is located in the top position of the intelligibles and the latter at the lower limit of this position. In-between beings show

109 See Chase (2018), 336–50 for Porphyry's thought on the creation of Matter in his commentary on the *Tim.*

110 *LSJ* s.v. ὅλος implies here a definite order, see also Arist., *Met.* 1024a; Pl., *Theaet.* 204a.

111 See Runia (2008), 166–7.

varieties according to the dominance of their paternal and creative aspects so that the one who is 'Father and Maker' and the one who is 'Maker and Father' are different from each other, as, in the first case, the paternal aspect predominates and, in the second, the creative aspect predominates.

In his commentary on the *Timaeus* (*In Tim.* 1.312.16-26),[112] Proclus classifies the divine beings according to what they cause: the one who is 'Maker' is only cause of the encosmic creatures; 'Maker and Father' is cause of supramundane and encosmic creatures; 'Father and Maker' is cause of intellective, supramundane and encosmic creatures; and 'Father' is cause of intelligible, intellective, supramundane and encosmic creatures. Since Porphyry defines Mithras as the 'Maker and Father' of the cosmos in *De Antro* 6, we can, at least, conclude that Mithras is the demiurgic god whose creative aspect predominates, and he creates supramundane and encosmic creatures. According to Origen's *Contra Celsum* 6.22, the latter seems to refer to the seven planets and the fixed stars and the former to the region beyond the fixed stars or the eighth gate.

The discussion now focuses on how Mithras is fitted into the metaphysical and theological schema of the *Oracles* and how epithets of Mithras, the 'Maker and Father' and the Demiurge, are theologically treated by the Neoplatonists. The following is a summary of the theological structure of the *Oracles*. The Father, Supreme Being, is ineffable,[113] transcendent and exempt from any engagement with creative activities, dwelling in the intelligible or Empyrean world. He is in himself, without having confined his own fire in his intellectual power (F 3 des Places). As Lewy states, his action discloses itself by means of his 'power' (δύναμις) and he uses intermediaries.[114] The Father is also defined as 'the supramundane paternal abyss' (τὸν ὑπερκόσμιον πατρικὸν βυθὸν, F 18 des Places).

We learn that the Father uses his power through intellect (F 3, F 4, and F 5 des Places). The intelligible realm is triadic, comprising the Father, the power or *dunamis*, which emerged from him, and the Demiurge or the second intellect (F 5 des Places). After the Father perfects all things, he delivers them to the second intellect which is erroneously known as the first among human beings (F 7 des Places).[115] The second intellect or the Demiurge has two functions and is dyadic in the same manner as Numenius' second god (F 8 and F 12 des Places). This intellect or Demiurge contains the Forms generated by the Father, as explained in the longest fragment of the *Oracles* (F 37 des Places) and it brings

112 See ibid., 167.

113 Psellus, *Hypotyposis* 1.1.

114 Lewy (1956), 78–9.

115 An echo of Numenius, F 17 des Places = F 26 Leemans.

sense-perception to the material world.[116] The Demiurge is depicted as 'the craftsman of the fiery cosmos' (ὁ κόσμου τεχνίτης πυρίου, F 5 des Places) and 'intellect of intellect' (νοῦ νόος). In his commentary on this fragment (*In Tim.* 2.57.26-58.3 Diehl), Proclus says that the Father is 'generative' (ζῳογονικόν), the second intellect connected with the Father, and the material realm (τὸ ὑλαῖον) is 'demiurgic' (δημιουργικὸν).[117] Ostensibly, the Demiurge, that is Mithras in *De Antro*, equals the second intellect of the *Oracles*, the father of the aethereal region consisting of the zones of the fixed stars and the seven planets.[118]

One of the passages in Proclus' Commentary on the *Timaeus* (*In Tim.* 1.316.12-18 Diehl) involves the discussion of how the 'Maker and Father' should be addressed by the Neoplatonists. The creation of the universe is the demiurgic decad, which describes the sensible world and includes the paternal monad and the tetrad.[119] Accordingly, the epithet of Mithras, 'the Maker and Father' refers to the perfect order of the cosmos. Porphyry might have considered this distinction in his assignment of these epithets to Mithras. However, it is difficult to come to a precise conclusion because we do not know if there was a myth of Mithras or a hierarchical and metaphysical structure of the mysteries like the *Oracles*. But, we can infer within these theological contexts that Mithras is a creative god, an embodiment of the properties of the Father, that is to say, of the preceding gods just as in the case of Zeus in the Orphic theogonies, or the primal intellect called the Father in the *Oracles*.

Porphyry takes it further and says that Mithras is not only the Maker and Father of the cosmos, but also the 'master of *genesis*' (γενέσεως δεσπότης, *De Antro* 24.12), an astral figure in the tauroctony which requires clarification. What should we understand by the epithet 'the master,' and how may we apply it to Mithras in the context of the *Chaldean Oracles* and Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*? At this stage I propose that Mithras has another aspect as *dunamis* at the lower ontological level, just as Hecate, traditionally known as the goddess of the underworld, has a similar aspect in the *Oracles*. According to Eusebius' report (*De Philosophia ex Oraculis* F 308 Smith = Eus., *PE* 5.6.2-5.7.2), Porphyry hints at Hecate's connection to Mind and Soul, and her function as

116 See Majercik (2013), 6 and Dillon (1996b), 394 for the connection with Numenius.

117 Philo, *De opificio mundi* 70–71; *Quaestiones in genesim* 4.8; Dillon (1996b), 168–70 traces this tripartite division of the Chaldean doctrine back to Xenocrates, but it is also rooted in numerous Middle Platonic sources.

118 This division into three realms is not clearly manifested in the extant fragments of the *Oracles* and is derived from the later Neoplatonists such as Proclus and Damascius (*Dubitationes et Solutiones* 2.88.21-22).

119 Runia (2008), 170.

animating the cosmos (ψυχῶσαι…κόσμον).[120] In the *Oracles* Hecate is sprung from the Demiurge. The goddess is depicted as an intellectual membrane, and seems to have such an intermediary position that she is influenced by the powers of the Father and the second intellect, while, at the same time, she casts her powers on the material world (F 6 des Places):

> Ὡς γὰρ ὑπεζωκώς τις ὑμὴν νοερὸς διακρίνει,
> πῦρ πρῶτον καὶ πῦρ ἕτερον σπεύδοντα μιγῆναι.
>
> As a subtended intellectual membrane, (Hecate) separates
> the first and second fires that are eagerly seeking to mingle.

According to F 50 des Places (= Damascius, *Dubitationes et Solutiones* 2.164.19), Hecate is interpreted as the *dunamis*, if the Fathers are accepted as a reference to the Supreme Being (F 3 des Places) and the Demiurge, as Dillon states.[121] On the other hand, Lewy equates Hecate (F 50 des Places) with the Moon and the ruler of the Sun, since the centre of the Moon is identified with the midway of the three Fathers. These Fathers are the rulers of the three worlds: the Intelligible or Empyrean World, the Aethereal World, including the zone of the fixed stars, the seven planets and the Sun in the centre, and the sublunar region containing the Earth.[122]

> Μέσσον τῶν πατέρων Ἑκάτης κὲντρον πεφορῆσθαι.
>
> Midway between the Fathers, the Centre of Hecate is borne along.

In a passage of his *On the Return of the Soul* preserved by Augustine (F 284 Smith = *Civ. Dei* 10.23.1-19), Porphyry was seemingly the first Neoplatonist to interpret the above verses of the *Oracles* as identifying the central hypostasis with Life.[123] Augustine says that Porphyry spoke of God the Father (deum patrem) and God the Son (deum filium), whom he called, in Greek, the paternal intellect (paternum intellectum) or paternal mind (paternam mentem). However, Augustine, perhaps disingenuously, does not identify what other entity Porphyry meant by the middle of these two.[124]

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120 Johnson (2013), 177.

121 Dillon (1996b), 394.

122 Procl., *In Tim.* 2.57.10 Diehl on the Chaldeans' tripartite division of the world; Lewy (1956), 139–44 for a detailed discussion of the fragment.

123 Lewy (1956), 455–6; Des Places (1971), 133; Majercik (2001), 266.

124 Trans. Dods (2009), 293–4; Johnson (2013), 66–72 for a discussion of triads and Augustine's report on Porphyry's noetic triad.

The *Oracles* employ the triad of Existence, Life and Intelligence for the transcendent entities, and this is also found in Porphyry's *Commentary on the Parmenides*.[125] This triad is called Father, Potency or Life, and Intellect: the Paternal Monad or Father corresponds to Existence,[126] the second intellect or the Demiurge to Intellect, and Life or Potency as the median principle is called Hecate, and she is placed between them.[127] The hypostasis of life is also identical to Psyche, the 'nourishing principle of the life-giving fire' (ἐκδότις πυρὸς ζωοφόρου), who 'fills the life-producing womb of Hecate' (τὸν ζῳογόνον πληροῖ τῆς Ἑκάτης κόλπον, F 32 des Places = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.420.13-16 Diehl).[128] Hecate is identified as the 'mistress of life' (ζωῆς δεσπότις, F 96 des Places), just as Porphyry calls Mithras the master of *genesis* in *De Antro* 24.12:[129]

> Οττι ψυχή, πῦρ δυνάμει πατρός οὖσα φαεινὸν,
> ἀθάνατός τε μένει καὶ ζωῆς δεσπότις ἐστὶν
> καὶ ἴσχει <κόσμου> πολλῶν πληρώματα κόλπων.
>
> The soul, existing as a bright fire through the power
> of the Father, remains immortal, she is mistress of
> life and comprehends the fullness of many folds in the world.

Mithras may then be identified with Hecate, as the former is called the master of *genesis* in *De Antro* 24 at the lower ontological level, the latter the master of

125 See the discusssion in Chapter 2, 'Participation in the Forms'; Procl., *In Tim.* 1.389.24-28 Diehl for the Chaldean triad, πατήρ δύναμις νοῦς. See Dillon (2010), 28, 'the One, in its 'positive' creative aspect, may be identified with the highest element of the intelligible realm, One-Being, or, in Chaldean terms, the 'Father' of the triad of 'Father – Life (or Power) – Intellect.' See also Majercik (2001), 266–9 for Porphyry's implication of the Chaldean triad in his *Commentary on the Parm.*

126 Majercik (2001), 278–86 for the substitution of the term Existence (ὕπαρξις) for the Chaldean Father in the Neoplatonic exegesis, which apparently goes back to Porphyry.

127 Lewy (1956), 142 n. 283; Turner (1991), 221–32.

128 On Hecate-Psyche see Lewy (1956), 83–98; Des Places (1971), 74 with n. 2.

129 According to Psellus in *P.G.* 122.1141 c7-9, Hecate refers to the World Soul and the World Soul sets in motion the sensible world and also Porphyry's identification of Hecate as the World Soul in *On the Soul* (F 438.9-10 Smith = August., *Serm.* 241.7). See also Majercik (2001), 286 (286–96 for full discussion), says: 'Now Hecate plays a dual role in the *Oracles*: she functions as a goddess in the traditional sense (and, specifically, as a goddess who can be evoked in the context of various Chaldean theurgic rites (F 2, F 72, and F 146–F 148 des Places)); she also functions as a cosmic principle closely identified with the Platonic World Soul (F 32, F 35, F 38, F 50, F 51–F 56, and F 96 des Places). This latter association was developed, in part, by a metaphysical reading of Hecate's cult statue, wherein various attributes of the goddess (hair, hips, loins, girdle, torches) were given cosmic significance. The general image is that of a powerful life-giving or zoogonic goddess who mediates between the intelligible realm of ideas and the sensible realm of nature.'

life (F 96 des Places). Considering that Hecate is 'Life' or *Dunamis* as median principle (F 50 des Places), Mithras might also be identified as a deity from which the multiplicity in the sensible world arises. The important difference between Mithras and Hecate can be specified as being that Mithras is a male principle of the cosmos, who controls *genesis*, whereas Hecate as the female principle is a guarantee of the continuation of *genesis*. However, as stated above, because there is no known myth of Mithras, it is difficult to estimate to what extent Mithras participates in the continuation of *genesis*. At least, if we interpret Porphyry's description of the bull saddled by Mithras with the dagger of Ares in *De Antro* 24.10-12, the bull or Taurus, which is assigned to Venus in *De Antro* 22.5-6, may be considered as the female principle whose sacrifice at Mithras' hands is the cause of the material creation.[130]

2 The Cave in Mind

(8.2–22) Ἀφ' ὧν οἶμαι ὁρμώμενοι καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ μετὰ τούτους Πλάτων ἄντρον καὶ σπήλαιον τὸν κόσμον ἀπεφήναντο. παρά τε γὰρ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ αἱ ψυχοπομποὶ δυνάμεις λέγουσιν

'ἠλύθομεν τόδ' ὑπ' ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον,'

Παρά τε Πλάτωνι ἐν τῷ ἑβδόμῳ τῆς Πολιτείας λέγεται 'ἰδὲ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους οἷον ἐν κατωγείῳ ἄντρῳ καὶ οἰκήσει σπηλαιώδει ἀναπεπταμένῃ πρὸς φῶς, τὴν εἴσοδον ἐχούσῃ μακρὰν παρ' ἅπαν τὸ σπήλαιον.' εἶτα εἰπόντος τοῦ προσδιαλεγομένου 'ἄτοπον λέγεις εἰκόνα,' ἐπάγει 'τὴν εἰκόνα, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, προσαπτέον πᾶσι τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λεγομένοις, τὴν μὲν δι' ὄψεως φαινομένην ἕδραν τῇ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου οἰκήσει ἀφομοιοῦντα, τὸ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς φῶς τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου δυνάμει.'

(8.2–22) Starting from these verses, I believe, both the Pythagoreans and Plato after them proclaimed the cosmos cave and cavern. For in Empedocles the powers that guide souls say:

'We came to this covered cave,'

130 See Beck (2004/1976a), 129–32/95–8 for a discussion on this theme and his emendation of the lacuna in *De Antro* 24.11. See Chapter 3, 'Reading *Dunamis* in *De Antro* 13.1-5 and the Body-Creation' for the difference of the female and male principles in Porphyry's *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* (F 359.5-11 Smith). In his exegesis of Mithraic symbols in the tauroctony, Beck (2006), 198–9 also identifies the bull, Taurus, with Moon and 'cattle-stealing god' with Mithras in *De Antro* 18. Cf. Edwards (1993), 122–5 argues that 'cattle stealing god' refers to Hermes.

> It is also said in the seventh book of the *Republic* of Plato: 'Now picture to yourself men, so to speak, in a subterranean cave and in a cavern-like dwelling, being open to the light, having a long entrance along the entire cavern.' Then, his interlocutor says: 'you are speaking of a strange image,' and he concludes: 'my friend Glaukon, we must apply the image to all we said before, comparing the place (abode) apparent to vision to the dwelling of the prison, and the light of the fire to the power of the Sun.'

We learn from Porphyry's (*VP* 9) and Iamblichus' (*VP* 5.27) biographies of Pythagoras that he used to spend most of the night and day in 'a cave, a dwelling proper to his philosophy' (ἄντρον οἰκεῖον τῆς φιλοσοφίας), in search of useful knowledge.[131] Elsewhere in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* (*VP* 17) Pythagoras is said to have descended into the Idaean cave in Crete, wrapped in black wool, and to have stayed there twenty-seven days, making offerings to Zeus. Although it is unclear what his exact purpose was, Pythagoras would, nonetheless, have sometimes secluded himself from the rest of his community in order to seek divine wisdom in the darkness of a cave. In this case, the cave to be discussed is not a place for union with the divine powers, as in the case of Pythagoras. It is not a *mithraeum*, according to Porphyry, an image of the cosmos where the followers of the mysteries of Mithras sought the salvation of their souls.

In this passage, Porphyry refers to the cave of Empedocles (31 B 120 DK), and of Plato in *Republic* 7, and traces the identification of the Empedoclean cave as a symbol of the cosmos back to the Pythagoreans and Plato. The particle (γὰρ) makes it quite plain that Porphyry counts Empedocles among the Pythagoreans and he broadly speaks of his followers as 'the Pythagoreans' in the preceding sentence of *De Antro*.[132] In *De Antro* 8.12-13, it is difficult to deduce what Empedocles meant by 'the powers that guide souls' (αἱ ψυχοπομποὶ

131 See Simonini (2010), 95 for the references of Porphyry's *VP* 9 and Iamblichus *VP* 5.27; Ustinova (2009), *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind: Descending Underground in the Search for Ultimate Truth*.

132 Timaeus (c. 345 – c. 260 B.C.E.) reported in his *Histories* (F 14) that Empedocles was a pupil of Pythagoras and was disallowed from participating in discussions, like Plato, because of plagiarism (D.L., 8.54). Neanthes of Cyzicus (3rd century B.C.E.) accepted the information on Empedocles and Plato provided by Timaeus, except for the specification that Pythagoras was not the master of Empedocles but he was the disciple of an unknown Pythagorean (D.L., 8.55). In a passage of the *Enn.* (4.8.1.21-23), Plotinus links Empedocles with Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, saying that Pythagoras and those after him used to speak in riddles about the descent of the souls into the Earth and many other matters (ᾐνίττοντο περί τε τούτου περί τε πολλῶν ἄλλων). Iamblichus lists Empodocles' name among the Pythagoreans (*VP* 36.267). See also Wright (1995), 4–5 for further discussion.

δυνάμεις).[133] However, the meaning of the phrase was known by Porphyry, who must have had the complete text. If we look at the ancient sources, in *Alcestis* 361, Euripides uses ψυχοπομπός for Charon, and Diodorus Siculus mentions Hermes as ψυχοπομπὸς in *Bibliotheca Historica* 1.96.6.1. Cornutus likewise states that Hermes' proper task is the guiding of souls as the Conductor of Souls in *Compendium* 22.7-9. The common usage of the phrase is mostly in the singular, whereas Empedocles would have used it in the plural for a group of soul-guiding powers. This class of guiding entities might come to the earth so as to perform the role of Hermes in *Odyssey* 24.1-2. Moreover, it is difficult to estimate to whom these guides spoke, whether it was Zeus, the philosopher, or any other divinities.

In his treatise *On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies* (*Enn.* 4.8.1.17-23 and 4.8.1.33-34), Plotinus also refers directly to Empedocles 31 B 115 and B 120 DK of *Purifications*[134] and Plato, just as Porphyry juxtaposes both philosophers in *De Antro* 8. Furthermore, Porphyry's quotations from Empedocles 31 B 120 DK and the passages of Plato's *Republic* 7 (*Rep*. 514a2-5, 515a4, and 517a8-b4) more or less overlap Plotinus' allusions to Empedocles 31 B 120 DK and to Plato's *Republic* 7.[135] Plotinus refers to the first four lines of Empedocles 31 B 115 DK, saying that there is a 'law for the sinful souls' (ἁμαρτανούσαις νόμον, *Enn.* 4.8.1.18); 'an exile from the gods' (φυγὰς θεόθεν, *Enn.* 4.8.1.19 = 31 B 115.13 DK) and 'having put my trust in raving strife' (νείκεῖ μαινομένωι πίσυνος, *Enn.* 4.8.1.20 = 31 B 115.14 DK) are direct quotations from the fragment. Elsewhere in the same treatise (*Enn.* 4.8.5.5-6), Plotinus refers once again to 31 B 115 DK: 'flight from the god' (φυγὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ), 'wandering' (πλάνη) and 'the sin which the judgement brings' (ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἐφ' ᾗ ἡ δίκη).

Empedocles considers the soul as a *daimon* who can fall into the material world due to a transgression, which is either participation in blood sacrifices (31 B 128 DK) or meat eating (31 B 130 and B 136 DK). In the *Cratylus* (*Crat.* 400c), one of Socrates' suggestions for the etymology of 'body' (σῶμα) is reminiscent of Empedocles' view of life on the Earth as a kind of expiation. Socrates suggests that the Orphics possibly gave this name to the body because the soul is punished for something and covered in the body, as if it were in a prison to keep it safe until the punishment is expiated. In *Gorgias* 493a, the phrase 'the

133 Ibid., 280.

134 Empedocles' *Purifications* is a work in which he explained the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration, has Orphic connotations in the sense that the Orphic sects conceived life as imprisonment in the body, a kind of expiation of the soul on Earth. See Wright (1906), 134–7; Burnet (1932), 71; Simonini (2010), 109–10.

135 MacKenna (1991), 335 n.93 and Fleet (2012), 54 n.21 refer to *Rep.* 514a, 515c, and 517b along with other dialogues in *Enn*. 4.8.1.23-26.

body is our tomb' seems to have Orphic mystical tones, evoking Empedocles' expiating soul on the earth.[136]

As previously said, Plotinus also mentions the cavern of Plato (τὸ σπήλαιον) and 'the cave of Empedocles' (Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ τὸ ἄντρον) in the same section of the *Ennead* (*Enn.* 4.8.1.33-34), possibly to draw a parallel between them. He does not, however, elaborate on their similarities, possibly due to the obscurity of Empedocles' language. Modern scholars generally do not find a consensus when discussing the cave of Empedocles. Guthrie says that ψυχοπομπὸς is indicative of souls being conducted to the underworld.[137] Jaeger, for example, asserts that the Empedoclean cave refers to the terrestrial world and that the notion of the world as cave is Orphic,[138] whereas Guthrie states that Empedocles considers the life of the soul as being connected with a higher region and an exile in Earth as the equivalent of death.[139]

In *Ennead* 4.8.1.32-35, Plotinus suggests that the cavern of Plato represents this world in the same way as the cave of Empedocles. Thus, it can be concluded that both caves belong to the sublunar region.[140] Plotinus' argument over the Empedoclean cave and the Platonic cavern conforms to Porphyry's own suggestion in *De Antro* because Porphyry aims to show that the caves actually belong to the material realm (*De Antro* 9.4-6), and to reconcile Plato's cavern with Homer's double-gated cave. The implication of the analogies of the divided line and the Sun in Porphyry's citations supports the idea that the cavern belongs to the material realm.

As regards the structure of Porphyry's citations of *Republic* 7 in the passage quoted, the first citation gives us a brief description of the place in which men dwell and occurs at the beginning of the analogy of the cave (*Rep.* 514a2-5). The second citation is Glaucon's short reaction to the geographical description of the cave which includes shackled human beings, the puppeteers, fire, and so on (*Rep.* 515a4). The last citation is the one in which Socrates clarifies that the analogy of the cave should be read within the context of the previous analogies (*Rep.* 517a8-b4): this means the analogy of the divided line in *Republic* 509c-511e and the analogy of the Sun in *Republic* 507b-509c. Porphyry's

136 Plotinus also refers to *Phaedo* 62b, 'the secret saying which claims that the soul is in prison.' Fleet (2012), 85–6 believes that Plotinus adapted a Pythagorean doctrine that the body is the prison-house of the soul.

137 Guthrie (1969), 254–5.

138 Burnet (1945), 223 n. 1; Jaeger (1947), 149; Dodds (1951), 174 with n. 114; Rohde (2000), 403 with n. 75.

139 Guthrie (1950), 311 n. 3.

140 Kingsley (1995), Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the principal elements and their equation with gods and goddess in Empedocles.

fragmentary citations from the *Republic* show that, if *De Antro* was assumed to be a course subject in his lecture curriculum, Porphyry's audience might have already known its missing parts by heart. We can also presume that Porphyry only choses those specific passages because the discussion is centred upon the cave, per se.

In *Republic* 514a-515c, Plato pictures a dystopic world, perhaps a cyber-world in the modern sense, where the only reality for the shackled prisoners is represented by the 'shadows' (σκιάι) of the puppets that the puppeteers cast upon the wall by means of the light of a fire.[141] The cave portrays a society in which the puppeteers are the manipulators and the shackled prisoners are manipulated by the puppeteers, who are doomed to lead a deceptive life since childhood. The manipulative puppeteers might be considered as a group of people such as politicians, legislators, poets, rhetoricians, etc., whereas the shackled prisoners represent the majority of people.

In *Republic* 509d, Plato describes two unequal regions divided into horizontal lines: the region above the horizontal line symbolises the intelligible realm and has the greater portion, the other below the horizontal line symbolises the visible realm and has the smaller portion. The greater portion accorded to the intelligible realm shows the clarity of the intelligible realm, while the smaller portion of the visible realm shows its obscurity.[142] These two main sections are, in turn, divided into two more sections so that we obtain four subsections, two on the side of the visible realm and two on that of the intelligible realm, and they are interrelated. According to the divided line, the subterranean cave has two sections, one occupied by the majority of people, who can only see some shadows reflected on the wall, and the other behind the wall occupied by the ruling class of the city. The former section falls within the first subsection, identified as the visible realm in the analogy of the divided line, comprised of shadows and reflections of images of the second subsection. In terms of state of mind this section also corresponds to the lowest state which Plato calls 'conjecture,' εἰκασία (*Rep*. 511e2). People's ways of thinking and understanding life, their self-perception and world view, are based on acceptance in advance of what they have been told by the others without questioning. The latter section represents the second subsection of the visible realm, which consists of the images or likenesses of animals, plants and objects made by humans (*Rep*. 510a). As to state of mind, the region represents 'belief' or 'persuasion,' πίστις (*Rep*. 511e2).

141 See Dorter (2006), 203–4; Sheppard (2009), 116–19 for a detailed discussion of the analogy of the cave.

142 Sheppard (2009), 112.

The stage displayed by Plato, so to speak, shows the journey of a person from the shadows to the realities or from darkness to clarity, that is to say from εἰκασία and πίστις to διάνοια, 'thought,' which corresponds to the first subsection of the divided line in the intelligible realm. The perception of objects differs according to section: an animal object appears real in the second subsection of the visible realm while this object becomes its image in the first subsection of the visible realm. However, the image of the animal of the second subsection of the visible realm should be considered as the shadow of the image of the animal in the first subsection of the visible realm, when one looks through the first subsection of the intelligible realm. This is a sort of movement of the state of mind from the sense-perception in the cave to 'reasoning' (διάνοια, *Rep*. 511d8-511e1) in the intelligible realm. The highest section of the state of mind is 'understanding or intelligence' (νόησις, *Rep*. 511d8). Plato's analogy of the divided line is an allusion to the core idea of the analogy of the cave which represents the necessity of escaping from the world of becoming to the world of the brightest real beings and reality (*Rep*. 518c). From the perspective of the movement of the state of minds from the visible realm to the intelligible realm, Porphyry may have considered the Neoplatonic doctrine of virtues, the political, the cathartic, the theoretical and the paradigmatic virtues in *Sententia* 32, in which Porphyry formulates them. These virtues provide the rational and philosophical mode of thinking through stages in order to achieve human excellence, as will be discussed later. This claim is reflected in the realisation of the darkness of the cave or the material realm, perceived through intellect in *De Antro* 6.5-6, which can be deemed to be the beginning stage of enlightenment.[143]

Referring to the comparison of the light of fire with the power of the Sun, we have already learned that the light of fire is a kind of intermediary that helps in creating shadows and appearances of the objects in the visible realm. In *Republic* 508c4-d2, Plato states that anything under the 'night light or another light' (νυκτερινόν φέγγος) instead of daylight cannot clearly seen because night light or another light makes eyesight weak and the eyes become virtually blind. On the other hand, the eyes under the Sun see clearly since sunlight provides them with that faculty. Elsewhere in his *Republic* (*Rep*. 508d), Plato applies the same comparison to the soul: if the soul is guided by a light, that is to say by truth and reality, it comprehends and perceives both truth and reality and gains intellect or reason. However, when the soul is mingled with darkness and

143 Edwards (1996), 93 for the comparison of the myth of Sophia of the Gnostics with Porphyry's identification of Matter with the darkness.

with the world of becoming and decay, it will be subjected to conjecture, which is changeable and unstable as if it were deprived of reason.

The Sun is both a heavenly divinity (*Rep*. 508a5-9) and the offspring of the form of Good (*Rep*. 508b13). Moreover, the Sun is not the same as *genesis* but is the cause of *genesis* and beyond *genesis*, as in the case of the form of Good. The Sun enables us to obtain truth and knowledge, but it is the cause of truth and knowledge while being beyond truth and knowledge (*Rep*. 508e). Plato's presentation of the Sun in the *Republic* is strongly reminiscent of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*, who is the most excellent cause of the creation of the cosmos.[144] In this instance, the sphere of the Sun remains restricted to the visible world, whereas the Demiurge shapes the entire universe including the Sun. When the liberated prisoner goes outside the cave, he also moves from a deceptive world to the world of realities by means of the Sun which gives him the potentiality to see the real things very clearly. The origin of the Sun stems from the form of Good and its participation in it. The fire in the cave might have been produced by the puppeteers in order to manipulate the majority of people. Another possibility is that the fire always exists within the cave and symbolises the world of generation and decay.

Consequently, the Platonic cave and its association with the divided line perfectly fits in with the overall context of *De Antro*, in which Porphyry, in great detail, seeks to prove that the philosophical life is the only way towards attaining truth and knowledge, and the cave, particularly the Platonic cave, is a place which one should absolutely avoid. That to which both Plato and Porphyry refer, is not an actual place, but symbolises the fact that we knowingly or unknowingly put our minds in prison.

3 Epilogue

This section examines the reason for Porphyry's extensive knowledge of the mysteries of Mithras on the basis of the possible connection between the Neoplatonists and Beck's hypothetical founding group of the mysteries in the city of Rome,[145] a historically real occurence notwithstanding its speculative historical base.

Beck proposes that the Mysteries of Mithras were instituted by a small group of Commagenian soldiers and family servants, and conveyed by them

144 Dorter (2006), 189–90 for the emanationist interpretation of the Demiurge and the Sun.
145 Beck (1998), 115–26 and (2004), 32–42.

to their peers in the Roman Empire.[146] Mithras had a prominent place in the royal cult, particularly at the time of Antiochus I of Commagene in the mid-first-century B.C.E. Antiochus I created his own cult, a syncretism of Greek and Persian gods, on Mount Nemrut. The kingdom ended more than a century later, and Antiochus IV abdicated the throne in favour of the Roman Empire in 72 C.E. After his abdication, the Commagenian military units must have been in close contact with Roman legions during the Judaean and Civil Wars.[147] These contacts between Commagenian and Roman forces are a convincing explanation for the widespread popularity of the mysteries among soldiers. As for the Commagenian royal family, they lived in Rome and were treated with great respect (Josephus, *Judaean War* 7.243), and they also had contacts with the Roman aristocracy and the imperial family.

As Beck asserts,[148] the mysteries were indeed a novel creation using former traditions.[149] In other words, the mysteries would have mixed two characteristics of the cult of Mithras, a Persian tradition based on Mithra-worship and a learned Western tradition, mainly astrological. The major novelty of the mysteries was Mithras' bull-killing interpreted as a mighty act of salvation. The association of Mithras with the Sun[150] and the use of astrology in the construction of images of the cosmos (εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου, *De Antro* 6.13) are, on the other hand, the inheritance of the royal cult of Antiochus I. Mithras is named as Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes in the inscription at Mount Nemrut (ἱεροθέσιον, *CIMRM* 32).[151] The solar identification of Mithras shows that its descendence is inherited from the royal cult of Commagene while the bull-killing of Mithras in the tauroctony is a novel creation of the Commagenian descendants of Antiochus I a century later.[152]

There is no need here to go into more detail; it would just be a rewriting of very well-known arguments on Mithras that Beck has already made. However, an eminent figure, Ti. Claudius Balbillus, might be of importance for shedding

146 See Merkelbach (1984), 75–7 suggests that the mysteries were created by a particular person of the imperial court in Rome, who originally came from the East, Armenia or the Pontos.

147 Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.25.2 for the Judaean War, and Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.1.2 and Josephus, *JW* 5.460-465 for the siege of Jerusalem; Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.7.1 and 37.2 for most probable previous contacts between Commagenian and Roman soldiers in Corbulo's Armenian battles; see also Beck (1998), 122 n. 40.

148 Beck (1998), 123.

149 Ibid.

150 Herodotus, *Historiae* 1.131; on this see also Edwards (1990b), 1–4; Strabo, *Geographica* 15.3.13.6.

151 Reliefs also show Mithras and the king in δεξίωσις, *V30*; Beck (1998), 124 n. 49 and (2006), 230–1.

152 Beck (1998), 124n. 49.

some light on Porphyry's interest in the mysteries of Mithras and on his sources of information about the mysteries. On the basis that Balbillus is a possible connection of the Commagenian royal family in Rome, he seems to be the redeveloper of astrology in the mysteries, which was related to an effective mode of Greek learning.[153]

Balbillus was a leading court astrologer during the reign of the Emperors Claudius, Nero, and Vespasian, and a famous equestrian. He was appointed the head of the museum and library in Alexandria and became Prefect of Egypt during the reign of Nero. He was also related by marriage to the Commagenian royal family, and perhaps also had some blood-relationship.[154] Balbillus is thought to have been the father-in-law of C. Iulius Antiochus Epiphanes, the son of the last king of Commagene; scholars generally accept that he was the son of Ti. Claudius Thrasyllus, the court astrologer and philosopher of Tiberius (Tacitus, *Ann*. 6.22), who might also have married a Commagenian princess.

Thrasyllus published a new edition of Plato's dialogues in which he arranged them in groups of four books and added a double title to each of the books, one taken from the name of the interlocutor, the other from the subject (D.L., 3.56-57).[155] In a paragraph in his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 20 and 21), in which Porphyry quotes from the work of Longinus entitled *On the End*, Thrasyllus is said to have written about the first principles of Pythagoras and Plato, along with Numenius, Cronius and Moderatus, all Neopythagoreans. In his *Ptolemy's Harmonics* (91.13 and 96.16), Porphyry also refers to a work of Thrasyllus, *On the Seven Tones*, so that we may assume that Thrasyllus was a Platonist with Pythagorean inclinations. Porphyry's other references to Thrasyllus are also found in *Ptolemy's Harmonics* (12.21 and 96.23) and in the *Introduction to Tetrabiblos* (5,4.203.5 and 5,4.212.16).

From all these references to Thrasyllus, it is evident that philosophical and astrological works of Thrasyllus were very well known to Porphyry. It is not impossible that Porphyry might also have known of Balbillus and his works, from which only two fragments survive.[156] I suggest that one of the sources of Porphyry could be Balbillus, along with Eubulus, Numenius and Cronius.[157] This suggestion is thus based upon Beck's hypothesis that the mysteries were founded by a group of Commagenian people in Rome in the first century C.E., and Balbillus would be the royal family's connection.

153 Ibid., 126–7 with n. 60 and (2004), 323.

154 Cichorius (1922), 390–8; Cramer (1954), 95; Tarrant (1993), 10.

155 Dillon (1996b), 184–5; Brisson (2004), 57.

156 Thirty-five and sixty lines in *CCAG* vol. 8.3, pp. 103–4 and vol. 8.4, pp. 235–8.

157 Beck (2006), 16n. 1; For Eubulus see Turcan (1975), 23–43, for Numenius and Cronius ibid. 62–5.

CHAPTER 3

Embodiment

After the examination of the Homeric cave as symbol of the cosmos, Porphyry offers an extensive interpretation of the elements of the cave in *On the Cave of the Nymphs* 10-19, starting from Naiad nymphs, mixing bowls and amphoras, the high stone looms, sea-purple garments to honey and bees. Rather than deal with this interpretation in all of its details, this chapter addresses itself to the particular passages related to the soul's descent into *genesis*, which underlies Porphyry's associations and identifications with moisture and pleasure.

The chapter starts with the examination of Porphyry's various interpretations of Naiad nymphs defined as *daimones*, as souls falling into *genesis* and as *dunameis* to elucidate what class of *daimones* or souls they represent in Porphyry's demonology and what part of the individual soul they control or affect. Next, it deals with the body-soul relationship from the ethical perspective of the disposition of the soul and explains the process of the creation of the body, which is related to the image of the Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple garments, in *De Antro* 14. Then, it closely examines the theory of *pneuma-ochema*, to which Porphyry attaches more importance than Plotinus, probably because of his great interest in the question as to 'how the soul is associated with the body.'[1] Finally, it focuses on the Orphic poem which Porphyry quotes in *De Antro* 16, especially on the meaning of the deception of the divine principle.

1 The Naiad Nymphs as Symbol of *Daimones* and Souls

This section examines the souls which descend into *genesis* due to their inclination to pleasure, identified with 'becoming moist.' Although the discussion is primarily based on *De Antro* 10.8-11.1, in which Porphyry refers to Numenius (F 30 des Places = F 46 Leemans), this passage raises the question within the context of *De Antro* as a whole as to why Porphyry uses different symbolic interpretations of the Naiad nymphs, firstly, as both souls and *dunameis* in *De Antro* 10.9-10, and then as *daimon* of generation in *De Antro* 35.7. This discrepancy prompts the examination of, firstly, whether *daimones* can also be considered as souls falling into *genesis*, besides being divine powers, and then what

1 *VPlot*. 13.

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type of *daimones* or souls they are in Porphyry's demonology and on what part of the individual soul they have control or effect.

The passage (*De Antro* 10.8-11.1) is important because it quotes from Heraclitus (22 B 77 DK) to support the idea of Porphyry's identification of 'becoming moist' with pleasure for the souls falling into *genesis*. However, he does not provide a detailed explanation, justifying the association of 'becoming moist' with pleasure and *genesis*. In order to elucidate this connection, the analysis considers the relevant parts of *De Antro* and other texts by Porphyry on demonology and psychology, especially *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, whose content on demonology is the most elaborate among his other fragmentary writings, and his commentary on the *Timaeus*, particularly F 7 and F 12 Sodano. The coherent reading of the various identification of the Naiad nymphs in *De Antro* will be helpful to see that Porphyry's thoughts on demonology are consistent, and that his works are complementary to each other.

1.1 *Preliminary Remarks on Numenius Fragment 30*

(10.8-11.1) Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστώσας δυνάμεις ἰδίως, ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας ψυχὰς κοινῶς ἁπάσας. Ἡγοῦντο γὰρ προσιζάνειν τῷ ὕδατι τὰς ψυχὰς θεοπνόῳ ὄντι, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Νουμήνιος, διὰ τοῦτο λέγων καὶ τὸν προφήτην εἰρηκέναι ἐμφέρεσθαι ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος θεοῦ πνεῦμα· τούς τε Αἰγυπτίους διὰ τοῦτο τοὺς δαίμονας ἅπαντας οὐχ ἱστάναι ἐπὶ στερεοῦ, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἐπὶ πλοίου, καὶ τὸν Ἥλιον καὶ ἁπλῶς πάντας· οὕστινας εἰδέναι χρὴ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐπιποτωμένας τῷ ὑγρῷ τὰς εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσας. Ὅθεν καὶ Ἡράκλειτον ψυχῇσι φάναι τέρψιν μὴ θάνατον ὑγρῇσι γενέσθαι, τέρψιν δὲ εἶναι αὐταῖς τὴν εἰς τὴν γένεσιν πτῶσιν, καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ δὲ φάναι ζῆν ἡμᾶς τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον καὶ ζῆν ἐκείνας τὸν ἡμέτερον θάνατον. Παρὸ καὶ διεροὺς τοὺς ἐν γενέσει ὄντας καλεῖν τὸν ποιητὴν τοὺς διύγρους τὰς ψυχὰς ἔχοντας. Αἶμά τε γὰρ ταύταις καὶ ὁ δίυγρος γόνος φίλος, ταῖς δὲ τῶν φυτῶν τροφὴ τὸ ὕδωρ.

(10.8-11.1) We specifically also call the powers that preside over water 'Naiad nymphs;' however, they also used to speak in general of all souls descending into *genesis* as Naiad nymphs. For they deemed that the souls settled on water, as being infused with the inspiration of the god, as Numenius says; because of this, he claims, the prophet also says that the spirit of God is borne upon the water, and for this reason the Egyptians make all divine beings stand not on solid ground but all on a floating vessel, both the Sun and all the others. These should be understood to be the souls hovering over the moist element as they descend into *genesis*. And it is for this reason (Numenius says) that Heraclitus says that 'it is enjoyment, not death, for souls to become moist,' that is to say, falling

> into *genesis* is a delight for them, and that he (Heraclitus) also says elsewhere that 'we live the death of them, and they live the death of us.' For this reason, the poet (Homer) calls those in *genesis* 'wet' because their souls are wet. For both blood and moist sperm are dear to them, just like the nourishment of the souls of plants is water.

This passage is a good example of how Numenius used various philosophical, religious and literary sources in order to show their fundamental agreement on a particular subject. In this instance, the passage discusses associations and identifications of *genesis*, into which the souls are falling, with moisture and pleasure. His first premise is that the souls settle on water because water is god-inspired. He draws on the Old Testament and Egyptian rituals to support this thought, whereas on the microcosmic level, he quotes from Heraclitus and Homer to say that any soul hovering over moisture is one which descends into *genesis* due to pleasure.

Numenius frequently makes references to the Old Testament, as in the case of *De Antro* 10.11-12, in which he refers to *Genesis* 1:2 (καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος).[2] His propensity to refer to Jewish tradition is also evident in F 1a des Places (= F 9a Leemans), which is a direct quotation from Numenius preserved in Eusebius (*PE* 9.7.1), F 1b and F 1c des Places (= F 9b and F 32 Leemans = Orig., *Cont. Cels.* 1.15 and 4.51 respectively). Numenius' interest in the Jewish tradition must have derived from the view that Moses was believed to be the predecessor of Pythagoras and Plato.[3] For example, Hermippus of Smyrna, a Peripatetic philosopher (c. 200 B.C.E.), traced the origins of Pythagoras' philosophy to the Jews.[4] Clement of Alexandria quotes from Numenius with a reference to Aristobulus (2nd or 3rd century B.C.E.), who claims that, like most of the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras and Plato gained their wisdom from the tenets of the Jews.[5] Numenius apparently approves Aristobulus' claim with his well-known saying τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων, 'what else is Plato than Moses in Attic Greek?'[6]

2 Likewise, as Johnson rightly observes, Porphyry shows his favourable stance on the Jewish tradition in his works, except for one reference in his *Contra Christianos* (F 39 Harnack = Eus., *Hist. Ecc.* 6.19.4), see Johnson (2013), 273–82 for a detailed discussion. See also Smith (2011), 40–1 for Porphyry's criticism of the Christian interpreters of Old Testament texts.

3 See Cook (2004), 36–41; Edwards (1990c), 64–75 for detailed discussions of Numenius' interest in the Jewish tradition.

4 Cook (2004), 9 n. 47.

5 Aristobulus, F 3a = Clement, *Stromata* 1.22.150.1-3.

6 F 8 = Clement, *Stromata* 1.22.150.4 = Eus., *PE* 11.10.12-14; Cook (2004), 36 n. 206; Petty (2012), 140–1.

In *De Antro* 10.11, it is clear that 'the prophet' is a reference to Moses, to whom Numenius also refers to in F 8 des Places (= F 17 Leemans)[7] and F 9 des Places (= F 18 Leemans), in the former as Moses (Μωσῆς), according to reporting source, and in the latter as Musaeus (Μουσαῖος). Although there could be doubt about the identification of Moses as Musaeus, who was the master of Orpheus, we know that Artapanus (c. 2nd or 3rd century B.C.E.), a Jewish apologist and historian, said that the Greeks called Moses Musaeus,[8] an identification established by the phonetic similarity of the names of these wisdom figures in the Jewish and Greek tradition.[9] Also, in his *Contra Celsum*, Origen informs us that Numenius quoted the story of Moses, along with the story of Jesus (*Contra Celsum* 4.51 = F 10a des Places = F 19 Leemans),[10] using, again, the name Musaeus instead of Moses. Gager points out that the prefix ἐμ-, which is put before φέρεσθαι, is the only difference from the Septuagint and that Numenius use of θεοπνοῷ refers to 'the effect of the divine breath on the water's surface,'[11] a combination of the words θεοῦ and πνεῦμα in *Genesis*,[12] which Numenius also used separately, as is apparent from *De Antro* 10.12.

As for the Egyptians' representation of their deities, particularly the Sun, on a floating vessel, for example, Plutarch discusses it in *On Isis and Osiris* 364c8-d2:[13]

> Ἥλιον δὲ καὶ Σελήνην οὐχ ἅρμασιν ἀλλὰ πλοίοις ὀχήμασι χρωμένους περιπολεῖν φασιν αἰνιττόμενοι τὴν ἀφ' ὑγροῦ τροφὴν αὐτῶν καὶ γένεσιν. οἴονται δὲ καὶ Ὅμηρον ὥσπερ Θαλῆν μαθόντα παρ' Αἰγυπτίων ὕδωρ ἀρχὴν ἁπάντων καὶ γένεσιν τίθεσθαι·
>
> They (the Egyptians) say that Helios and Selene move around their orbits using as vehicles not chariots but boats, thus suggesting they were nurtured and born from moisture. They also believe that Homer (*Il.* 15.201) as well as Thales had relied on Egyptian knowledge when he stated that water was the first principle and origin of everything.

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7 Eus., *PE* 11.10.12-14 for F 8 and *PE* 9.8.1-2 for F 9. Chadwick (1980), 226 n.3 for Numenius' use of Egyptian sacred scribes.

8 Apud Alexander Polyhistor, quoted by Eus., *PE* 9.27.3, *FGrH*/*BNJ* 726 F 3b; Des Places (1973), 52 n. 3; Lamberton (1986), 60 n. 50; Petty (2012), 143.

9 Gager (1972), 139.

10 It is the only fragment on Numenius' knowledge of Christianity, see Petty (2012), 143 for the fragment; Edwards (1990c), 67–9; Chadwick (1980), 226.

11 Gager (1972), 65 n. 119, 66; cf. Cook (2004), 167–8; Petty (2012), 178.

12 Des Places (1973), 118; Petty (2012), 178.

13 Trans. Griffiths (1970), 170.

The Egyptians indeed envisaged that the Moon navigates in a barque and assigned not just one but two barques to the Sun, one for use during the day, the *M'andifet* barque, the other for use during the night, the *Mesketet* barque.[14] This may be considered a religious reflection of the activities of daily life, as the Egyptians mostly employed ships for their own travels and transportation. The Greeks, on the contrary, used horse-drawn vehicles, and thus Greek poetry describes Helios and Selene represented as driving chariots at full speed.[15]

Egyptian rituals are discussed also in Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*, where at 7.2 he makes a reference to 'Osiris, who is in the divine barque.'[16] According to Iamblichus, 'the god's sailing in a ship symbolises the authority that guides the world' (ὁ δ' ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενος τὴν διακυβερνῶσαν τὸν κόσμον ἐπικράτειαν παρίστησιν). The solar barque was a customary Egyptian image of the seat of the god's dominion. It is evident that the Egyptian rituals were associated with the fertility of the soil and the Nile, and those barques were manifestations of divine seats of gods and goddesses. Numenius' account of *all* the Egyptian gods being represented on floating vessels, if Porphyry did not alter it, differs from the accounts provided by Plutarch and Iamblichus. The former includes the Moon along with the Sun, the latter emphasises the Egyptians' worshipping the Sun (*De Mysteriis* 7.2-3). It should not, however, matter whether Numenius included all gods or simply the Sun-god, if his aim was to demonstrate the common characteristics of religious rituals of different traditions in general.

1.2 Daimones *and Souls on the Descent into* Genesis

As we have seen, in *De Antro* 10.9-10, Porphyry states[17] that Naiad nymphs are deemed to be souls descending into *genesis*, apart from the fact that they are traditionally the divine powers associated with water. Porphyry corroborates this statement by referring to Egyptian rituals that represent all *daimones* on barques rather than solid ground. Porphyry's first statement seems to be a generalisation related to a group of individual souls, particularly in the process of descending into *genesis*. However, this does not include the Egyptian gods, for it is evident that symbolism in the Egyptian practices implies that *daimones* do

14 See ibid., 426–7 for a detailed discussion of Plutarch's passage.

15 For example, *Homeric Hymns* 32.9-10.

16 *PGM* 14.33-34; Clarke (2003), 293 n. 386.

17 Hereafter, I will use Porphyry instead of Numenius even if the passage is quoted from him in order to prevent any confusion when I refer to Numenius' other texts. See also my '*Daimones* Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*' in *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels* (2018), eds. Luc Brisson, Seamus O'Neill and Andre Timotin, Brill, coll. 'Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition,' 140–59.

not touch water but sit on barques. In his *De Mysteriis* (7.2.23-36), Iamblichus interprets 'being over the mud'[18] as the correct representation of the transcendence, immateriality and incorporeality of the god. More precisely, Iamblichus interprets 'sitting on a lotus[19] over the mud without touching it' as a symbol of the 'intellectual and empyrean leadership of the god' and we could compare this interpretation to the divine powers on barques, which signify divine sovereignty, transcendence and incorporeality, in order to contrast them with the individual souls in *De Antro*:[20]

> Συμμαρτυρεῖ δὲ τούτῳ καὶ τὸ ἑξῆς σύμβολον. Τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ λωτῷ καθέζεσθαι ὑπεροχήν τε ὑπὲρ τὴν ἰλὺν αἰνίττεται μὴ ψαύουσαν μηδαμῶς τῆς ἰλύος, καὶ ἡγεμονίαν νοερὰν καὶ ἐμπύριον ἐπιδείκνυται· κυκλοτερῆ γὰρ πάντα ὁρᾶται τὰ τοῦ λωτοῦ, καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς φύλλοις εἴδη καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς καρποῖς φαινόμενα, ᾗπερ δὴ μόνῃ κινήσει τῇ κατὰ κύκλον νοῦ ἐνέργειά ἐστι συγγενής, τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ ἐν μιᾷ τάξει καὶ καθ' ἕνα λόγον ἐμφαίνουσα. Αὐτὸς δὲ δὴ ὁ θεὸς ἵδρυται καθ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν τοιαύτην ἡγεμονίαν καὶ ἐνέργειαν, σεμνὸς καὶ ἅγιος ὑπερηπλωμένος καὶ μένων ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ὅπερ δὴ τὸ καθέζεσθαι βούλεται σημαίνειν. Ὁ δ' ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενος τὴν διακυβερνῶσαν τὸν κόσμον ἐπικράτειαν παρίστησιν.
>
> The following symbol also bears witness to this. For sitting on a lotus signifies transcendency over the mud, such as in no way touches the mud, and also indicates intellectual and empyrean leadership. For everything to do with the lotus is seen to be circular, both the forms of the leaves and the produce of the fruit, and it is the circular motion that is uniquely connatural with the activity of intellect, and which exhibits itself consistently in one order and according to one principle. And the god is established by himself, and beyond such leadership and activity, venerable and holy, entirely simple and abiding in himself, a fact which his seated position is intended to signify. And sailing in a ship represents the sovereignty that governs the world.

Here, Iamblichus' interpretation of the Egyptian gods suggests that *daimones* are not corporeally in contact with the material world, in contrast to Naiad nymphs who are situated at the lower part of the material world, as will be

18 See Clarke (2003), 291 n. 378 for the mud represents the primeval water of the Egyptian ritual.

19 *PGM* 4.1105; *PGM* 2.106–107. See Clarke (2003), 293 n. 382: 'The cosmic lotus also signified the power of Re (or Ra), its opening bud representing the coming of light over darkness.'

20 *De Mysteriis* 7.2.23-36; trans. Clarke (2003), 292–3.

seen, in the Neoplatonic cosmological model and invisible, unlike the Sun or the Moon. We need to clarify how Porphyry defines *daimones* in order to understand to which *daimones* he refers in different passages in *De Antro* 10.12-14, 12.5, 29.3, and 35.7. As regards Porphyry's demonology, some relevant passages in *De Abstinentia* will aid us, along with information from Numenius' and Porphyry's commentaries on Plato's story of Atlantis, which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*.

According to Iamblichus' report in *De Mysteriis* 1.20 and 2.1, one of the issues that Porphyry discussed in his *Letter to Anebo* is 'what it is that distinguishes the daemons from the visible and the invisible gods' (τί τὸ διακρῖνόν ἐστι τοὺς δαίμονας ἀπό τε τῶν ἐμφανῶν καὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν θεῶν).[21] This shows us that, in Porphyry's time, as Dodds observes, demonology was a current subject of interest connected with the development of theurgy.[22] Thus, the analysis of the relevant parts of *De Antro* may contribute to understanding Porphyry's treatment of the subject.

We learn from *De Abstinentia* 2.37.10-2.38.1 that the region below the visible celestial bodies, that is, the sublunary region, including the cosmos,[23] the fixed stars and the seven planets, is filled with *daimones*, who can be sub-divided into different ranks.[24] The crowd of the invisible gods (or *daimones*) must be appeased by people's prayers and sacrifices. Some of *daimones* are well-known among people and carry names, others are anonymous and only prayed to by a limited number of people but also elsewhere in his works Porphyry also touches on the anonymity of the *daimones*, for example, in his *Homeric Questions* 8.1.93-94, in which he refers to this anonymity to explain Odysseus' prayer 'hear me, Lord, whoever you are' (κλῦθι, ἄναξ, ὅτις ἐσσί) in *Odyssey* 5.445. In *De Abstinentia* 2.37.10-2.38.1, he provides a more extensive discussion:[25]

21 Trans. Clarke (2003), 75 (1.20) and 83 (2.1).

22 Dodds (1963), 295.

23 Here the cosmos may refer to the World Soul, which Porphyry would see as an entity wholly divine, like the seven planets and the fixed stars.

24 Porphyry's five-fold division of the Egyptian social class as the various grades of *daimon* is found in his commentary on *Tim*. 24a (F 17 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim*. 1.152.10-28 Diehl), according to which the priests correspond to the archangels, the messengers of the gods in the heaven; the military to the *daimones* descending into bodies, the herdsmen to those watching over the flocks of 'animals;' the hunters to those that hunt down souls and confine them in bodies; lastly, the farmers to those watching over fruits. See also Tarrant (2007), 249–50; Dillon (2009), 282–5 for Porphyry's sources of the five-fold division and Iamblichus' objection to him (F 16 Dillon); Johnson (2013), 86–8 for a discussion of the fragment in comparison with that of *Phil. Orac.* (F 325 Smith).

25 Trans. Clark (2000), 70.

> Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς θεοῖς, τῷ τε κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀπλανέσι καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἔκ τε ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος οὖσιν ὁρατοῖς θεοῖς, ἀντευχαριστητέον τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον διὰ τῶν θυσιῶν τῶν ἀψύχων. λοιπὸν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τὸ τῶν ἀοράτων πλῆθος, οὓς δαίμονας ἀδιαστόλως εἴρηκε Πλάτων. τούτων δὲ οἳ μὲν κατονομασθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων παρ'ἑκάστοις τυγχάνουσι τιμῶν τ' ἰσοθέων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης θεραπείας, οἳ δὲ ὡς τὸ πολὺ μὲν οὐ πάνυ τι κατωνομάσθησαν, ὑπ' ἐνίων δὲ κατὰ κώμας ἤ τινας πόλεις ὀνόματός τε καὶ θρησκείας ἀφανῶς τυγχάνουσιν. τὸ δὲ ἄλλο πλῆθος οὕτω μὲν κοινῶς προσαγορεύεται τῷ τῶν δαιμόνων ὀνόματι, πεῖσμα δὲ περὶ πάντων τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ὡς ἄρα καὶ βλάπτοιεν <ἂν> εἰ χολωθεῖεν ἐπὶ τῷ παρορᾶσθαι καὶ μὴ τυγχάνειν τῆς νενομισμένης θεραπείας, καὶ πάλιν εὐεργετοῖεν ἂν τοὺς εὐχαῖς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ λιτανείαις θυσίαις τε καὶ τοῖς ἀκολούθοις ἐξευμενιζομένους.
>
> To the other gods, the world and the fixed and wandering stars – visible gods composed of soul and body – we should return thanks as has been described, by sacrifices of inanimate things. So there remains the multitude of invisible gods, whom Plato called *daimones* without distinction. People have given some of them names, and they receive from everyone honours equal to the gods and other forms of worship. Others have no name at all in most places, but acquire a name and cult inconspicuously from a few people in villages or in some cities. The remaining multitude is given the general name of *daimones*, and there is a conviction about all of them that they can do harm if they are angered by being neglected and not receiving the accustomed worship, and on the other hand that they can do good to those who make them well-disposed by prayer and supplication and sacrifices and all that goes with them.

In this passage, Porphyry refers to *Timaeus* 40d6-9, in which Plato describes *daimones*, the invisible gods, as the offspring of the visible gods (ἔκγονοι θεῶν), that is to say, of the cosmos, the fixed stars and the seven planets.[26] In accordance with custom, Plato gives the names of the traditional gods in the order of their generation: Ge, Ouranos, Oceanus, Tethys, Phorcys, Kronos, Rhea, Zeus, Hera and others (*Tim.* 40e5-41a2). Accordingly, the Sun, the Moon and so on, being symbolically represented on barques by the Egyptians (*De Antro* 10.12-14), correspond to the visible gods. In the (*Symp.* 202d11-203a4), Plato regards

26 In a passage of his commentary on *Tim.* 29a5-8 (F 44.10-13 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.332.14-17 Diehl), Porphyry calls the demiurges of mortals *daimones*, although νέοι θεοί (Procl., *In Tim.* 1.218.16 Diehl) is a standard way of referring to the planetary gods to whom the Demiurge hands over the task of weaving of mortal bodies in *Tim.* 42d5-7; see for this remark Runia (2008), 55 n. 78 and 188 n. 773.

daimones as intermediaries between gods and humans. After Plato, according to Plutarch's testimony in *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 416c-d, Xenocrates as Porphyry's possible source goes further and compares the equilateral triangle to the nature of the gods, the scalene to that of man, and the isosceles to that of the *daimones*.[27] The isosceles triangle, partly equal and partly unequal, shows the dual characters of *daimones* because they have divine powers and human feelings.

If we turn to *De Antro*, Porphyry uses the etymology of the word nymph, which signifies not only female deities of nature at the lower ontological level but also nubile women or brides (*De Antro* 12.1-4). He predicates the connection between brides and Naiad nymphs on the fact that water used for bathing brides is under the protection of the Naiad nymphs, a belief which he touches on in various passages of *De Antro* (… διὰ τὰ ἐν ἄντροις καταλειβόμενα ἢ ἀναδιδόμενα ὕδατα, ὧν αἱ ναΐδες, ὡς προεστήκασι νύμφαι in *De Antro* 6.21-23; Νύμφας δὲ ναΐδας λέγομεν καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑδάτων προεστώσας δυνάμεις in *De Antro* 10.8-9; αἳ ναμάτων καὶ πηγῶν προεστῶσαι πηγαῖαί τε καὶ ναΐδες διὰ τοῦτο κέκληνται in *De Antro* 13.2-3; λίθινοι δὲ κρατῆρες καὶ ἀμφιφορεῖς ταῖς προεστώσαις τοῦ ἐκ πετρῶν ἐξιόντος ὕδατος νύμφαις οἰκειότατοι in *De Antro* 14.1-2).

In *De Antro* 12.5, Porphyry defines the *daimones* which preside over *genesis* (γενεθλίοις δαίμοσιν), implying that they are divine powers, or, more precisely, Naiad nymphs who traditionally belong to the lineage of Poseidon but are among the multitude of the water-deities of lower rank. Another reference to *daimones* is found in *De Antro* 35.7, in which Porphyry explains Homer's description of Odysseus sitting under the olive tree, by specifying that he is 'appeasing the *daimon* of generation' (ἀπομειλισσομένῳ τὸν γενέθλιον δαίμονα)[28] because of his sinful action, namely his blinding of Polyphemus,[29] the son of

27 Dillon (2005a), 128–9; Clark (2000), 154 n. 299 for Xenocrates and Numenius as Porphyry's possible sources. See also Dillon (1996b), 37–8 for Xenocrates' interest in Pythagoreanism. See also Johnson (2013), 86 for the Middle Platonists like Plutarch's influence on Porphyry's portrayal of daemons in *De Abstinentia*; Proctor (2014), 416–49 argues the similarities between Origen the Christian's and Porphyry's characterisation of malevolent daemons in *De Abstinentia* on the basis that Porphyry's citation of the demonology of 'certain Platonists' in *De Abstinentia* 2.36.23 signifies Ammonius' Platonic heirs, particularly Origen the Christian.

28 Porphyry also uses as the phrase 'appeasing the gods of generation,' ἀπομειλίξασθαι τοὺς γενεθλίους θεοὺς in *Ad Marcellam* 2.3 to defend his marriage as a concession to the social norms. See Smith (1974), xvii; Wicker (1987), 82; Whittaker (2001), 164; trans. Zimmern (1986), 40.

29 Cf. Heraclitus' interpretation of Odysseus' blinding Polyphemus as his triumph over anger (θυμός, *Homeric Problems* 70.4-5). See also Russell (2005), 112-13 for translation; Montiglio (2011), 50 n. 53.

the nymph Thoosa[30] and the greatest among the Cyclopes (*Od.* 1.69-72). This interpretation is supported by the fact that *daimones* and nymphs are associated with *genesis* throughout the treatise, and that Porphyry states, in *De Antro* 35.10, that Odysseus must appease 'the gods of the sea and of matter' (ἁλίων καὶ ὑλικῶν θεῶν), which includes the nymph Thoosa.

The last reference to *daimones* in *De Antro* should be considered in a wider cosmological and astrological context. In *De Antro* 29.1-3, Porphyry discusses proper assignments of the regions, asserting that the western regions are appropriate to *daimones* (δαίμοσι δὲ τὰ δυτικά, *De Antro* 29.3), while the eastern ones are appropriate to the gods. There are two further regions, the South and North, which he allocates to the immortals or more divine beings, and to the race of the mortals subject to *genesis*, respectively.[31] In connection with Homer's double-gated cave, starting from *De Antro* 20 to 29, Porphyry explains the poet's assignment of the northern entrance of the cave of the nymphs to the mortals (θνητοί) and the southern to the immortals (ἀθάνατοι). His detailed discussion covers the gates of heaven (πύλαι οὐρανοῦ) or the gates of the Sun, the gates of the Sun and the Moon, and the solstitial gates.[32] With regard to the solstitial gates, which the winter and summer solstices occur in Capricorn ruled by Saturn, and in Cancer ruled by the Moon respectively, the soul descends into the material world through the chain of the seven planets towards the Earth through the Moon, and ascends the seven planets, each of which also represents a specific initiatory grade of the mysteries of Mithras, to the sphere of the fixed stars through Saturn.[33]

This statement prompts us to raise a number of questions. Firstly, why does Porphyry assign the western region particularly to *daimones*? Secondly, what precisely is the distinction between the souls falling into *genesis* from the North and those *daimones* who are placed in the West? Lastly, what is the link between the western region and the Naiad nymphs as *daimones*, seeing

30 The daughter of Phorcys listed as one of the offspring of the visible gods in Plato's *Tim.* 40e6.

31 κατὰ ταῦτα τοίνυν τῷ μὲν θνητῷ καὶ γενέσει ὑποπτώτῳ φύλῳ τὰ βόρεια οἰκεῖα, τῷ δὲ θειοτέρῳ τὰ νότια, ὡς θεοῖς μὲν τὰ ἀνατολικά, δαίμοσι δὲ τὰ δυτικά.

32 Numenius, F 32 des Places = Test. 44 Leemans = *De Antro* 28.1-10 and Procl., *In Remp.* 2.128.26–129.21 Kroll = Numenius, F 35 des Places = Test. 42 Leemans: according to Numenius, the gates of the Sun signify the gates of Capricorn and Cancer. The correspondence of the solstices to the gates of the Sun seems to result from the fact that the Sun astrologically occurs in Capricorn during the winter solstice and in Cancer during the summer solstice. See Chapter 4, 'The Gates of the Sun and the Moon' for further discussion on this subject.

33 See Beck (2006) and the relevant articles in Beck (2004) for the astrological interpretation of the solstitial gates, and Greenbaum (2016), Chapter 5.

that Porphyry identifies these nymphs with the souls coming into *genesis* in *De Antro* 12.1-2?

In *De Antro* 3.24-26, we receive some information on what 'the West' traditionally signifies: it is the quarter which people face entering into temples, whereas the statues of the gods and the entrances to almost all temples face the East. Indeed, this is a part of the puzzle, which Porphyry puts forward in *De Antro* 3.16-4.2 and which he describes as 'not a simple question' (οὐ μικρᾶς οὔσης ἀπορίας). He will explain later why Homer assigns the northern entrance to the mortals and the southern to the immortals, in a passage which will be discussed in the next chapter (*De Antro* 29.1-3). For our present purpose, what matters first is to clarify what the region of the West cosmologically signifies.

Concerning the last question – whether there is a link between the western region and Naiad nymphs as *daimones* – the general association with the moistness of this region may, at least, offer some insights. In his *Tetrabiblos* (1.11.3-4.1), Ptolemy describes the region to the West as moist:[34]

> ὁ δὲ πρὸς ταῖς δυσμαῖς τόπος αὐτός τέ ἐστιν ὑγρὸς διὰ τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν γινομένου τοῦ ἡλίου τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἀναποθέντα τότε πρῶτον ἄρχεσθαι ὑγραίνεσθαι· οἵ τε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ φερόμενοι ἄνεμοι, οὓς κοινότερον ζεφύρους καλοῦμεν, νεαροί τέ εἰσι καὶ ὑγραντικοί.
>
> The region to the West is itself moist, because when the Sun is therein the things dried out during the day then first begin to become moistened; likewise the winds which blow from this part, which we call by the general name Zephyrus, are fresh and moist.

Porphyry states in *De Antro* 24.4-9 that the eastern and western regions correspond to the equinoctial points: the East is the spring equinox occurring in Aries in the ascendant, the West the autumnal equinox occurring in Libra in the descendant.[35] In *De Antro* 29.8-9, we receive further information that the cardinal point (κέντρον) falling above the Earth (ὑπὲρ γῆν) corresponds to the East (τὸ ἀνατολικόν), the other under the Earth (ὑπόγειον), to the West (τὸ δυτικόν). In *Adversus Mathematicos* 5.13.6-8, Sextus Empiricus also affirms that Libra is located under the Earth, whereas Aries is in the zenith or midheaven:[36]

34 Trans. Robbins (1940), 63.

35 These cardinal signs, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn and Aries, are located where seasonal changes occurs, see Greenbaum (2016), 152–5 for a discussion of strong and *daimonic* signs of zodiac.

36 For a detailed discussion of the cardinal points see Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 5.12-13.

> οἷον ἔσται γὰρ σαφὲς ἐπὶ παραδείγματος καρκίνου ὡροσκοποῦντος μεσουρανεῖ μὲν κριός, δύνει δὲ αἰγόκερως, ὑπὸ γῆν δέ ἐστι ζυγός.
>
> so – for it will be clear by means of an example – if Cancer is in the ascendant, Aries will be in the zenith, Capricorn sets, Libra is under the Earth.

As both Edwards and Johnson also point out, Porphyry's assignment of the western region to *daimones* is reminiscent of his commentary on the story of Atlantis in *Timaeus* 20d8-9 (F 10 Sodano),[37] which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 1.77.6-24. Proclus' commentary gives a lengthy doxography including Crantor, Amelius, Origen the Neoplatonist (F 12 Weber), Numenius (F 37 des Places = F 49 Leemans) and Iamblichus (F 7 Dillon), as follows:[38]

> Οἳ δὲ καὶ μίξαντες τὴν Ὠριγένους, ὥσπερ οἴονται, καὶ Νουμηνίου δόξαν ψυχῶν πρὸς δαίμονας ἐναντίωσιν εἶπον, τῶν μὲν δαιμόνων καταγωγῶν ὄντων, τῶν δὲ ψυχῶν ἀναγομένων· παρ' οἷς ὁ δαίμων τριχῶς· καὶ γὰρ εἶναί φασι τὸ μὲν θείων δαιμόνων γένος, τὸ δὲ κατὰ σχέσιν, ὃ μερικαὶ συμπληροῦσι ψυχαὶ δαιμονίας τυχοῦσαι λήξεως, τὸ δὲ πονηρὸν ἄλλο καὶ λυμαντικὸν τῶν ψυχῶν. τοὺς οὖν ἐσχάτους δαίμονας τὸν πόλεμον τοῦτον συγκροτεῖν καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἐν τῇ εἰς τὴν γένεσιν καθόδῳ· καὶ ἅπερ οἱ παλαιοί, φασι, θεολόγοι εἰς Ὄσιριν καὶ Τυφῶνα ἀνήγαγον ἢ εἰς Διόνυσον καὶ Τιτᾶνας, ταῦτα ὁ Πλάτων εἰς Ἀθηναίους καὶ Ἀτλαντίνους ἀναπέμπει δι' εὐσέβειαν· πρὶν δὲ εἰς τὰ στερεὰ σώματα κατελθεῖν, [ἐναντίωσιν] παραδίδωσι τῶν ψυχῶν πρὸς τοὺς ὑλικοὺς δαίμονας, οὓς τῇ δύσει προσῳκείωσεν· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ δύσις, ὡς ἔλεγον Αἰγύπτιοι, τόπος ἐστὶ δαιμόνων κακωτικῶν· ἐπὶ δὲ ταύτης ἐστὶ τῆς οἰήσεως ὁ φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος, ὃν καὶ θαυμάσειεν ἄν τις, εἰ ἕτερα λέγει τῆς Νουμηνίου παραδόσεως.
>
> Others combine (or so they believe) the views of Origenes and of Numenius and say that it [the conflict between Athenians and Atlantines] is a conflict between souls and daemons, with the daemons being a down-dragging force and the souls trying to come upwards. Their view is that there are three kinds of daemons, a divine type of daemon, a relational (*kata schesin*) type, which is made up of individual souls who have

37 Edwards (1990d), 259, 'The notion that the west is the seat of daemons is invoked in Porphyry's essay.' Johnson (2013), 92 n. 223. See Tarrant (2007), 60–84 for a detailed discussion of the exegetical practices on the story of Atlantis.

38 Trans. Tarrant (2007), 170. See also Dillon (2009), 268–70 for a summary of the relevant doxography; Johnson (2013), 91–2 for the illuminating discussion of the passage.

> received a daemonic lot, and the other corrupt kind – the soul polluters. So daemons of the final type strike up this war with souls on their descent into generation. And they claim that, just as the ancient theologians refer this to Osiris and Typhon or to Dionysus and the Titans, Plato attributes it to Athenians and Atlantines out of reverence. For he hands down the tradition that, before they come into three-dimensional bodies, there is rivalry between souls and the enmattered daemons that he assigned to the West; for the West, as Egyptians say, is the region of harmful souls. The philosopher Porphyry is of this view, and one would be surprised if he is saying anything different from the view authorized by Numenius.

Porphyry interprets the story of Atlantis as an allegory of hostility between souls who are trying to ascend to the higher realm and debased *daimones*, combining the interpretations of Origen and Numenius. Origen explained the story of Atlantis as a conflict between *daimones*: one group good, the other evil, one superior in numbers, the other in power, with the good *daimones* emerging victorious (Procl., *In Tim.* 1.76.32-77.3 Diehl). Numenius regarded it as a battle between two different souls: more honourable souls, nurslings of Athena, and the souls who have dealings with generation and are related to the god Poseidon, who is the ruler of *genesis* (*In Tim.* 1.77.3-5 Diehl).[39] Numenius regarded the story of Atlantis as a battle between souls: some souls are under the protection of Athena, an obvious symbol of practical wisdom or φρόνησις (compare *De Antro* 32.24[40]) and some under the protection of Poseidon. Numenius' interpretation reflects the dualism in his doctrine of the human soul, claiming that the soul does not have two or three parts but two separate types of souls, 'the rational and irrational' (τὴν μὲν λογικήν, τὴν δ' ἄλογον, F 44 des Places = Porphyry, *περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων*, F 253.18-21 Smith).[41]

Porphyry's classification includes three, rather than two, types of *daimones* in his commentary on the story of Atlantis, and according to Proclus' quotation, there is an intermediate type of *daimones* between the divine and those being at the lowest level. These *daimones* are in fact a group of souls who have received *daimonic* lots, but are also in the process of generation, that is to say, of descending into the material world, which is associated with moisture

39 In *Crit*. 113c, Plato calls Poseidon the domain of Atlantis, see also Edwards (1990d), 258.

40 See Dillon (2009), 286 for Athena as symbolising practical wisdom.

41 According to Edwards (1990d), 258-60, Numenius' exegesis of the story of Atlantis is the archetype of Porphyry's *De Antro*, and he speculatively claims that Porphyry's interpretation of the story as the combat of the material *daimones* and the soul might have had some place in Numenius' work.

in *De Antro*. The function of the *daimones* at lowest level is to encourage these souls falling into *genesis*.

In *De Antro* 29.15, Porphyry assigns the western region to *daimones* connected with matter; it is also the place assigned to Atlantis by Plato.[42] If we apply Porphyry's tripartite division of *daimones* and/or souls in the story of Atlantis to *De Antro* 29.13-15, we can propose that:

– The South seems to be suitable to 'more divine beings' (θειότεροι, *De Antro* 29.24; θείων δαιμόνων, F 10.9 Sodano = *In Tim.* 1.77.10 Diehl), that is to say, heroic or rational souls which might refer to Odysseus because he is under the guidance of *phronesis* symbolised by Athena, associated with *phronesis* by Porphyry in *De Antro* 32.12, as discussed in detail in Chapter 4.[43] In the context of *De Antro*, *phronesis* can be defined as knowledge of the future gained from experience and good judgment. The early warning and advice of Athena to Odysseus that every foreign possession must be put away in the cave (δεῖν τὸ ἄντρον ἀποθέσθαι πᾶν τὸ ἔξωθεν κτῆμα), proves that the goddess manifests herself as knowledge of the future and that the hero is in the initial phase of ascending to the intelligible realm. This suggestion is compatible with *De Abstinentia* 2.41.16-20, in which Porphyry distinguishes good *daimones* from the harmful *daimones*. Accordingly, the idea that the good *daimones* have the capacity to foretell potential dangers about to be caused by the harmful ones (προσημαίνουσιν εἰς δύναμιν τοὺς ἐπηρτημένους ἀπὸ τῶν κακοεργῶν κινδύνους) corroborates Porphyry's identification of Athena with *phronesis*, that is knowledge of the future.
– The North is appropriate to those who are subject to a *daimonic* lot, and are in the process of falling into generation. 'The individual souls have received a *daimonic* lot' (ὃ μερικαὶ συμπληροῦσι ψυχαὶ δαιμονίας τυχοῦσαι λήξεως, F 10.8 Sodano = *In Tim.* 1.77.11-12 Diehl) is an explicit reference to the souls to which a *daimon* is assigned in the *Republic* (*Rep*. 617e1, 619c5, and 620d8), which, in the context of *De Antro,* would also pertain particularly to Odysseus.
– The East is apparently allocated to the gods, though it is difficult to pin down precisely which gods Porphyry has in mind. I think that Porphyry must allude to the visible gods mentioned in *De Abstinentia* 2.37. We also know from his *Life of Plotinus,* Porphyry calls Plotinus' guiding spirit alternately a god (*VPlot*. 10.22-25) and a more divine *daimon* (*VPlot*. 10.28-29), which is also

42 See Tarrant (2007), 170 n. 316.

43 In *De Genio Socratis* 580d, Plutarch connects Socrates' *daimonion* with Athena as 'standing at Odysseus and showed him the way, illuminating his path,' see Greenbaum (2016), 22.

used in his commentary on the story of Atlantis as stated above, suggesting that, in Porphyry's view, a more divine *daimon* may also be called a god.[44]

– Lastly, the West is the region of the wicked or harmful *daimones*, who are embedded in matter, namely Naiad nymphs. They benefit from our thoughtlessness and stimulate our 'appetites' (ἐπιθυμίαι) with desire and longing for wealth and power and pleasure.[45]

It seems difficult to distinguish the boundaries between *daimones* and souls, particularly those who are allocated to the southern and northern regions, corresponding to *daimones* or souls in the intermediate condition in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (1.77.10-12 Diehl). However, depending on which process he experiences, Odysseus belongs to both regions, the North and the South, in the sense that he is a soul who descends into the material world but, at the same time, he is one of those who are trying to attain the intelligible realm. It is probable that the souls in the process of *genesis* or *apogenesis* are *daimones* themselves and are also guided by *daimones*, who live with the souls. In fact, in the *Timaeus,* Plato separates *daimones* which preside over the top part of the soul (90a2-5),[46] which we liken to Athena, from those which dwell within the soul (90c2-6):[47]

> (90a2-5) τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχῆς εἴδους διανοεῖσθαι δεῖ τῇδε, ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἑκάστῳ δέδωκεν, τοῦτο ὃ δή φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τῷ σώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον.
>
> (90a2-5) Now we ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as god's gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit. This, of course, is the type of soul that, as we maintain, resides in the top part of our bodies. It raises us up away from the Earth and toward what is akin to us in heaven, as though we are not plants of the Earth but of heaven.

44 In *In Alc.* 78.10-79.6, Proclus calls Socrates' *daimon*ion not only *daimon* but also a god and, refers to Plotinus possessing a divine *daimon* in *In Alc.* 72.20-73.80, see Addey (2014b), 60–2.

45 *De Abstinentia* 2.40.15-19.

46 See *Leg.* 732c for the guiding spirit as controlling power and *Leg.* 877a as the guardian spirit.

47 Trans. Zeyl (2000), 85–6; I changed the last sentence of 90a2-5 and kept '*daimon*' in the translation of 90c2-6 instead of Zeyl's adopting 'guiding spirit' in order to underline the difference between the guiding spirit given to us and *daimon* which is the soul itself.

> (90c2-6) καθ' ὅσον δ' αὖ μετασχεῖν ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει ἀθανασίας ἐνδέχεται, τούτου μηδὲν μέρος ἀπολείπειν, ἅτε δὲ ἀεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντά τε αὐτὸν εὖ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα σύνοικον ἑαυτῷ, διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι.
>
> (90c2-6) And to the extent that human nature can partake of immortality, he (a man) can in no way fail to achieve this: constantly caring for his divine part as he does, keeping well-ordered the *daimon* that lives within him, he must indeed be supremely happy.

As Dillon remarks,[48] the idea of human souls as their *daimones* has its source in *Timaeus* 90c, but this idea should be distinguished from the notion of guiding *daimones*, which are dwelling in the highest part of the body, properly speaking the dominant part of the soul, in *Timaeus* 90a.[49] In keeping with Plato's distinction between the divine soul and the guiding spirit, Odysseus is one of those divine souls allocated to the South, who passes through all stages of *genesis* and returns to the fatherland, that is to say, the intelligible realm (*De Antro* 34.8-10; Plot., *Enn.* 1.6.8.16-20), whereas Athena might be considered as Odysseus' guardian *daimon* or god, allocated to the East, who rules the rational part of Odysseus' soul and leads him to the divine. In his *On Our Allotted Daimon* (*Enn.* 3.4.3), Plotinus considers our guiding *daimon* to be an entity superior to us. In allusion to *Republic* 617e1, in which Plotinus discusses the choice of our own guiding *daimon*, he says, 'if our sense-perception is active, the guiding *daimon* becomes the rational principle' (εἰ μὲν τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ᾖ αἰσθητικοί, καὶ ὁ δαίμων τὸ λογικόν, *Enn.* 3.4.3.5-6). However, if we live according to the rational principle, the guiding *daimon* stays above it, lying idle because the guiding *daimon* approves what the rational principle performs. Plotinus' remarks are consistent with the idea that Athena operates as Odysseus' rational principle when he leads a sensible life.[50]

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48 Dillon (1996b), 319–20.

49 Pl., *Phaedo* 107d-108c, and *Rep*. 617e and 620d-e. See Alt (2005), 73–90 for a discussion of guiding and evil *daimones* in the Platonic tradition, particularly in Plotinus and Porphyry; Timotin (2012), 243–331 for Socrates' *daimon* and guiding *daimon* starting from Plutarch to Proclus; Finamore (2014), 36–50 on Socrates' *daimonion* in Apuleius and Plutarch; Addey (2014b), 51–72 for a detailed discussion of Neoplatonists' view of Socrates' *daimonion* where she particularly focuses on Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* as a central study.

50 Dillon (2012), 12 convincingly interprets Plotinus' remarks on the guiding *daimon* as 'the undescended soul looked at from another angle' and likens our *daimon* to 'something like our "super-ego."' For Plotinus' demonology and the notion of the guiding *daimon* see also Lepajoe (1998), 7–16; Dillon (2005b), 339–51; Brisson (2009), 189–202; Timotin (2012), 286–300; Corrias (2013), 443–62.

As regards the assignments of the gods to the East and of the *daimones* to the West, Porphyry's intention is to indicate two extremities, divine (good) and wicked (evil) *daimones*. As opposed to the tripartite division of *daimones* in the commentary of the story of Atlantis, following Xenocrates' division of *daimones* into good and evil,[51] Porphyry also divides *daimones* into two classes in *De Abstinentia* 2.38.6-10 and 2.38.24-29. Good *daimones* stimulate balance and reason; in a sense, they lead souls to the divine by controlling their *pneuma*.[52] On the other hand, harmful *daimones*, which Porphyry also calls souls, are subject to extravagancies in the material world due to their uncontrolled *pneuma* revealing anger, fear, appetite, etc.[53]

In another passage of his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, Proclus reports Porphyry's interpretation of a disaster, *Timaeus* 22d3-5 (F 13 Sodano). The disaster of which Plato speaks in *Timaeus* 22d3-5 is a destruction on the Earth by fire because of a shifting of celestial bodies. Plato says that people who live in higher and dry places perish more than those who dwell near rivers and seas. Proclus criticises Porphyry on the grounds that, due to his ethical condern, he has a propensity to interpret a discourse on natural phenomena into that of souls (*In Tim.* 1.116.26-117.18 Diehl).[54] Proclus' account shows other evidence of Porphyry's particular interest in the subject of the relationship between the soul and body (as is also confirmed by *VPlot.* 13). More importantly, the passage bears resemblance to *De Antro* 10.4-11.1, in that Porphyry refers to the same fragment of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK, but not 22 B 62 DK as in *De Antro* 10.16-17, and he uses the same argument:[55]

> Ὁ δέ γε φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων μετάγει τοὺς λόγους καί φησιν, ὅτι ἄρα καὶ ἐν ταύταις ποτὲ μὲν ὑπερζεῖ τὸ θυμοειδές, καὶ ἡ ἐκπύρωσις αὕτη φθορά ἐστι τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀνθρώπων·
>
> ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι εἴκτην
>
> ἐπὶ θυμουμένου τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἐποίησεν Ὅμηρος · ὁτὲ δὲ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ὑπὸ τῆς γενεσιουργοῦ κατακλυζόμενον ὑγρότητος ἐκνευρίζεται καὶ βαπτίζεται τοῖς τῆς ὕλης ῥεύμασι, καὶ ἄλλος οὗτος ψυχῶν τῶν νοερῶν θάνατος, ὑγρῇσι γενέσθαι, φησὶν Ηράκλειτος. εἰ δὲ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς διατέτακται, τῶν μὲν κατὰ

51 Plut., *De Iside* 361b = F 25 Heinz/229 Isnardi Parente. Schibli (1993), 147–8; Dillon (2005a), 130.

52 Johnson (2013), 86. See a detailed discussion of *pneuma* below.

53 Trans. Clark (2000), 70–1. See Alt (2005), 81 for a remark about Porphyry as the first Platonist who explains the origin of of evil *daimones*.

54 In the following discussion I will assume, with Dillon (2009), 277, that Proclus quotes Porphyry's text verbally except where he offers criticism. For Proclus' use of Porphyry see also Tarrant (2007), 212 n. 496.

55 Trans. Dillon (2009), 276–7.

> θυμὸν παθῶν ἀπείρατοι μένουσιν ὅσοι ἂν κεχαλασμένον ἔχωσι τὸν θυμὸν καὶ σύμμετρον εἰς τὴν τῶν δευτέρων ἐπιμέλειαν· τοῦτο γὰρ οἱ κοῖλοι τόποι καὶ ὑδάτων γείτονες σημαίνουσι. τῶν δὲ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν, οἱ συντονώτερον ἔχοντες τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ἐγηγερμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης· τοῦτο γὰρ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τόποι δηλοῦσι. πέφυκε γάρ πως τὸ μὲν θυμικὸν ὀξυκίνητον εἶναι καὶ δραστήριον, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἔκλυτον καὶ ἀσθενές· μουσικοῦ δ' ἀνδρὸς χαλάσαι μὲν τοῦ θυμοῦ τὸ εὔτονον, ἐπιτεῖναι δὲ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τὸ ἐκμελές.
>
> The philosopher Porphyry transfers the description from the phenomena to souls, and says, forsooth, that in these sometimes the spirited becomes overheated, and this ecpyrosis is the destruction of the 'men' within us:
>
> 'and his eyes were like gleaming fire.'
>
> Homer says of the enraged Agamemnon in a temper (*Il.* 1.104).
>
> But when the desiring part is flooded over by the creative wetness and is unnerved and submerged in the streams of matter, then this is another death of intelligent souls, 'becoming wet' as Heraclitus says.[56] And if this is asserted correctly, as many as have their spirited part slackened, and symmetrical to a concern for secondary things, remain unvexed by the passions of the spirit; this is the meaning of the 'hollow places, near to water.' And those who have their desiring part keyed up and roused up from matter, are unvexed by those of desire; for this is the meaning of the 'higher place.' For the spirited part is somehow by nature quick of movement and energetic, while the desiring part is slack and weak; and it is the work of a man skilled in music to slacken the tension of the spirit, while tightening up the flatness (τὸ ἐκμελές) of Desire.

In this passage, we may find evidence to show how Naiad nymphs (or *daimones*), who are associated with wetness in *De Antro*, have an influence or impact on the soul. Γενεσιουργός in *In Tim*. 1.117.5 seems to be a reference to Poseidon as symbol of the ruler of *genesis*, which is also found in Proclus' commentary on the story of Atlantis (*In Tim.* 1.77.4 Diehl). Quoting from Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK, Porphyry draws analogies between the spirited part of the soul (τὸ θυμοειδές, cf. *Rep*. 439d) and the high places, and the desiring part of the soul (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, cf. *Rep*. 439e) and the hollow places. The spirited part is located in a relatively higher part of the soul, manifesting itself as anger,

56 Heraclitus, 22 B 77 DK, 'it is enjoyment not death for souls to become moist, falling into *genesis* is a delight for them, as quoted in full in *De Antro* 10.20-11.1 and discussed in the previous section.

temper and so on, and suffering from overheating. The desiring part is the lower part of the soul, manifesting itself as slackness and weakness, and is associated with moistness.

In accordance with Porphyry's interpretation of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK,[57] 'becoming wet' is an indication of a weakened rational part of the soul, while in *De Antro* 10.20-11.1, Porphyry says that 'becoming wet' is a pleasure for souls due to their fall into *genesis*. If we combine these two interpretations, 'wetness' symbolises the soul's tendency towards materialistic pleasure and its loss of rationality and *genesis* occurs because of this tendency and vice versa. In *De Antro* 10.16-17, Porphyry quotes another fragment of Heraclitus 22 B 62 DK: 'we live their death, they live our death' and claims that Heraclitus says that Homer calls souls in *genesis* 'wet.' In line with Porphyry's similar interpretations of Heraclitus 22 B 77 DK, 'death' in 22 B 62 DK[58] implies spiritual death[59] of the rational part of the soul while living its corporeal life. This death refers to the predominance of the desiring or appetitive part of souls. This idea receives support from *Timaeus* 88a7-b5, in which Plato advocates a balanced relationship between the soul and body, explaining that, if a body is too strong for its weak-minded soul, this leads to excessive bodily needs, that is, excessive desire for food, drink, sex and so on, and a neglect of the rational part of the soul:[60]

> σῶμά τε ὅταν αὖ μέγα καὶ ὑπέρψυχον σμικρᾷ συμφυὲς ἀσθενεῖ τε διανοίᾳ γένηται, διττῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν οὐσῶν φύσει κατ' ἀνθρώπους, διὰ σῶμα μὲν τροφῆς, διὰ δὲ τὸ θειότατον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν φρονήσεως, αἱ τοῦ κρείττονος κινήσεις κρατοῦσαι καὶ τὸ μὲν σφέτερον αὔξουσαι, τὸ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς κωφὸν καὶ δυσμαθὲς ἀμνῆμόν τε ποιοῦσαι, τὴν μεγίστην νόσον ἀμαθίαν ἐναπεργάζονται.
>
> But when, on the other hand, a large body, too much for its soul, is joined with a puny and feeble mind, then, given that human beings have two sets of natural desires – desires of the body for food and desires of the most divine part of us for wisdom – the motions of the stronger part will predominate, and amplify their own interest. They render the functions of the soul dull, stupid, and forgetful, thereby bringing on the gravest disease of all: ignorance.

57 Kahn (1979), 245.

58 Ibid., 216–20; Marcovich (2001), 240–1.

59 See Chapter 4, 'The Journey through the Intelligible Realm' for a discussion of the meaning of the spiritual death.

60 Trans. Zeyl (2000), 83–4.

In conclusion, because of Porphyry's sophisticated interpretation of *daimones* and his symbolic language in *De Antro*, it is difficult to mark precisely the boundary between *daimones*, souls and gods in Porphyry's doctrine. Ambiguity also results from the intermediate position of *daimones*, who are capable of participating in the world of humans and in the world of gods and are not completely impassible, having both human emotions and divine capacity. We might, however, come to the conclusion that the souls in the process of *genesis* or *apogenesis* are also called *daimones* until they are passing through the sublunary region, a region in which *daimones* dwell. The souls falling into *genesis* are those who have not yet completed their self-improvement and are accompanied by a guiding spirit, as in the case of Odysseus and the goddess Athena. On the other hand, it would appear that the souls which are in their ascent out of *genesis* are classified by Porphyry as 'more divine beings.' Porphyry's treatment of Homer's Naiad nymphs is multifaceted. They are not only defined as souls descending into *genesis* because of their association with wetness, but also identified as *daimones* embedded in matter, like the Atlantians in the *Timaeus*, in other words, harmful *daimones* who affect the desiring part of individual souls and take advantage of people's weaknesses. The discussion on Porphyry's identification of Athena with *phronesis* in Chapter 4 will throw further light on the essence of the relationship of Odysseus and Athena and on the claim that Athena is Odysseus' guiding *daimon*.

2 Reading *Dunamis* in *De Antro* 13.1-5 and the Body-Creation

This section analyses the concept of *dunamis* which Porphyry uses for Naiad nymphs in *De Antro* 10.8-10 and 13.1-5. After an introduction of Porphyry's treatment of mythical female principles such as Amphitrite and Naiad nymphs as generative powers, the section is subdivided into two parts according to the process of the creation of the human body. Porphyry draws a distinction between souls and watery powers, which are represented by different symbols in the Homeric cave. Following this distinction, the section focuses on *De Antro* 14, where Porphyry compares Homer's stone looms to the bones of living beings, identifying the weaving process as an appropriate symbol for souls descending into *genesis* and the creation of the body (*De Antro* 14.1-3). Next, it briefly examines the body-creation process and its ethical disposition of the soul, which are found in Plato's *Timaeus* (*Tim.* 69d-72d and 74e-75a) along with Porphyry's commentary on *Timaeus* 24b4-7. Then, it examines the description of the creation of the body in *De Antro* 14 in the context of embryology, referring to *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων* and *Ad Gaurum* to show the distinction between the soul itself and the embodied soul.

Porphyry refers to Naiad nymphs as *dunameis* twice, in *De Antro* 10.8-10 (= Numenius, F 30 des Places = Test. 46 Leemans), a passage quoted and discussed in the previous section, and in *De Antro* 13.1-5, as they preside over water (προεστώσας, *De Antro* 10.8; προεστῶσαι, *De Antro* 13.2). In the latter passage, Porphyry explicitly distinguishes watery powers from souls, setting up an argument that each are represented by different symbols:

> (13.1-5) Ἀνακείσθω δὴ τὸ προκείμενον ἄντρον ψυχαῖς καὶ ταῖς μερικωτέραις ἐν δυνάμεσι νύμφαις, αἳ ναμάτων καὶ πηγῶν προεστῶσαι πηγαῖαί τε καὶ ναΐδες διὰ τοῦτο κέκληνται. τίνα οὖν ἡμῖν διάφορα σύμβολα, τὰ μὲν πρὸς τὰς ψυχὰς ἀναφερόμενα, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἐν ὕδασι δυνάμεις, ἵνα κοινὸν ἀμφοτέραις καθιερῶσθαι τὸ ἄντρον ὑπολάβωμεν;
>
> (13.1-5) So, let us suppose that the cave in question is dedicated to souls and to nymphs who are more specific in their powers, namely those who preside over streams (*namata*) and springs and are also called spring nymphs and naiads because of this. Then, which different symbols do we have, some of them referring to the souls and others to the powers in waters, in order that we can understand the cave as being dedicated in common to both?

In a passage of his *Homeric Questions*, *ad Il.* 8.1.95-98, Porphyry remarks that Homer considers everything to be full of divine powers (*dunameis*), referring to Odysseus' prayer, in *Odyssey* 5.445, to the unknown *daimon* of the river of Scheria (κλῦθι, ἄναξ, ὅτις ἔσσι):[61]

> εὔχεται δὲ τῷ ποταμῷ, ὡς ἂν ἑκάστου ἔχοντος δαίμονα. ὁ δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς κρήναις οἶδε θεάς, ἃς Νύμφας καλεῖ· Νύμφαι κρηναῖαι, κοῦραι Διός, καὶ ἄλλαι Νύμφαι ὀρεστιάδες, κοῦραι Διός. οὕτω πεπληρῶσθαι θείων δυνάμεων Ὅμηρος ἡγεῖτο ἅπαντα.
>
> [Odysseus] prays to the river, as though each one should have a deity. He is also aware of goddesses in the fountains, who he calls Nymphs: Nymphs of the fountain, daughters of Zeus (*Od.* 17.240), and others are Nymphs of the mountain, daughters of Zeus (*Il.* 6.420). Thus Homer believed that everything was filled with divine powers.

In this passage, Porphyry describes the nymphs of springs and mountains as both *daimones* and *dunameis*. An identification of Naiad nymphs as *dunameis*

61 Trans. MacPhail (2011), 131.

also occurs in his *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* (F 359.5-11 Smith = Eus., *PE* 3.11.22).[62] Here, Porphyry gives the lineage of water deities: Oceanus represents the power of water as a whole while Tethys, traditionally known as the consort of Oceanus, is the symbol of that power as female principle. Likewise Amphitrite, traditionally known as the wife of Poseidon, is the female principle and power which produces the sea, whereas Poseidon is the sea-power that presides over the creation of the sea-water. At a lower ontological level, Porphyry classifies powers of the waters into two types according to their qualities: nymphs are the power of the sweet waters, such as streams and springs (as in the case of *De Antro*) and Nereids are the powers of the salty waters:

> Τὴν δὲ ὑδροποιὸν ὅλην δύναμιν Ὠκεανὸν προσεῖπον, τὸ σύμβολον αὐτῆς Τηθὺν ὀνομάσαντες. Τῆς δὲ ὅλης ἡ μὲν τῶν ποτίμων πεποιημένη, Ἀχελῷος αὐτοῖς κέκληται, ἡ δὲ τῶν θαλασσίων Ποσειδῶν, πάλιν τῆς θαλασσοποιοῦ, καθὸ γεννητική, Ἀμφιτρίτης οὔσης. Καὶ αἱ μὲν τῶν γλυκέων ὑδάτων μερικαὶ δυνάμεις Νύμφαι, αἱ δὲ τῶν θαλασσίων Νηρηΐδες κέκληνται.
>
> They called the whole watery power Oceanos, and named its symbol Tethys. However, of the whole watery power, that which presides over the creation of the fresh waters is called by them Achelous, and that which presides over the sea-water Poseidon; in turn the power which produces the sea, in so far as it is productive, is Amphitrite. The particular powers of the sweet (fresh) waters are called Nymphs, those of the sea-waters Nereids.

Especially the *dunameis* which Porphyry assigns to Poseidon and his female counterpart, Amphitrite, provide a significant clue that the female principle has generative power, that is to say, the female principle is the *dunamis* which is active in the process of creation. The female principle guarantees the continuation of the generative process in perpetuity. At least, Porphyry's reference to the waters which are under the protection of Naiad nymphs being 'everflowing' (ἀενάων, *De Antro* 12.4) might be deemed to be indicative of continuity of *genesis*. On the other hand, the male principle fulfils a more static role in comparison with the female principle and the male principle is a provider of power, which does not actively intervene in the creative process. According to the context of the *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, at the lower ontological level, the male

62 See Viltanioti (2017), 61–74 for a discussion of the role of divine powers and the notion of *dunamis* in his work.

principle can be likened to the Father who generates the cosmos, and the female principle to the Maker who receives the matter or source from him.[63]

Porphyry states that female principles, Naiad nymphs, actively participate in the process of 'body-creation,' σωματουργία, a noun whose usage is extremely rare (*De Antro* 14.3).[64] Porphyry explains, step by step, Homer's description of Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple garments on high stone looms, 'a wonder to be seen.' He interprets the stone as the bones in living beings, and the stone (rather than wood) that constitutes the loom as the most appropriate material, bearing a strong resemblance to bones. The sea-purple colour of the garments suggests the colour of blood that forms flesh, the body covering the soul like a cloak. In his *De Abstinentia* (2.46), Porphyry, likewise, describes the body as a garment, calling it a 'skin tunic' (χιτῶνα τὸν δερμάτινον) very much as he does in *De Antro* 14.11 (χιτών γε τὸ σῶμα τῇ ψυχῇ ὃ ἠμφίεσται), taking up a well-known philosophical image.[65] Lastly, concerning Homer's words 'a wonder to be seen' (θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι), Porphyry argues that there are two primary perspectives for the process of the body-creation, according to its composition (πρὸς τὴν σύστασιν) or with respect to the soul's connection to the body (πρὸς τὴν πρὸς τοῦτο σύνδεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς):

> (14.1-16) λίθινοι δὲ κρατῆρες καὶ ἀμφιφορεῖς ταῖς προεστώσαις τοῦ ἐκ πετρῶν ἐξιόντος ὕδατος νύμφαις οἰκειότατοι· ψυχαῖς δὲ εἰς γένεσιν κατιούσαις καὶ σωματουργίαν τί ἂν εἴη οἰκειότερον σύμβολον τούτων; διὸ καὶ ἀπετόλμησεν εἰπεῖν ὁ ποιητὴς ὅτι ἐν τούτοις
>
> 'φάρε' ὑφαίνουσιν ἁλιπόρφυρα θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.'
>
> ἐν ὀστοῖς μὲν γὰρ καὶ περὶ ὀστᾶ ἡ σαρκοποιία, λίθος δὲ ταῦτα ἐν ζῴοις λίθῳ ἐοικότα· διὸ καὶ οἱ ἱστοὶ οὐκ ἀπ' ἄλλης ὕλης, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ λίθου ἐρρήθησαν. τὰ δ' ἁλιπόρφυρα φάρη ἄντικρυς ἡ ἐξ αἱμάτων ἂν εἴη ἐξυφαινομένη σάρξ· ἐξ αἵματος μὲν γὰρ ἁλουργῆ ἔρια καὶ ἐκ ζῴων ἐβάφη καὶ τὸ ἔριον, δι' αἵματος δὲ καὶ ἐξ αἱμάτων ἡ σαρκογονία. καὶ χιτών γε τὸ σῶμα τῇ ψυχῇ ὃ ἠμφίεσται, θαῦμα τῷ ὄντι ἰδέσθαι, εἴτε πρὸς τὴν σύστασιν ἀποβλέποις εἴτε πρὸς τὴν πρὸς τοῦτο σύνδεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς. οὕτω καὶ παρὰ τῷ Ὀρφεῖ ἡ Κόρη, ἥπερ ἐστὶ παντὸς

63 See Chapter 2, 'Mithras as the Maker and Father of All, and as the Ruler of *Genesis*.' Porph., *In Tim.* F 40 Sodano. The association of female principles with the active power recalls the *Chaldean Oracles*, and *dunamis* alludes to the intermediary female principle of the Chaldean triad, which consists of Father, Power or Potency, and Intellect in F 4, F 56, and F 96, as discussed in the previous chapter, see also Majercik (1989), 139.

64 It otherwise only occurs in *Corpus Hermeticum* 26.7.10 (= Stob., *Anth.* 1.49.69.69); Procl., *In Tim.* 3.318.6 Diehl.

65 Clark (2000), 158 n. 332; Dodds (1963), 308; Cook (2004), 172–3 for the term as part of the interpretive tradition in Porphyry.

τοῦ σπειρομένου ἔφορος, ἱστουργοῦσα παραδίδοται, τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν πέπλον εἰρηκότων οἷον θεῶν οὐρανίων περίβλημα.

(14.1-16) Hence, stone mixing bowls and amphoras are entirely proper to the nymphs who preside over water, which comes out of rocks. On the other hand, for souls descending into *genesis*, and the into body-creation, which symbol could be more suitable than these (the stone looms) For this reason, the poet (Homer) also boldly says on these looms

'they weave the sea-purple cloaks, a wonder to be seen.'

For the making of flesh happens on bones and around bones, and these bones are the stone in living beings since they resemble stone. Because of this, the looms too were said (by Homer) to be made of stone, and not of any other matter. And the sea-purple cloaks should clearly be the flesh, which is woven from blood; for sea-purple wool is sea-purple through blood and the wool was dyed with the blood of animals; and the formation of flesh happens through blood and from blood. And the body is a cloak for the soul, clothing it, indeed 'a wonder to be seen,' whether you consider it from the perspective of the body's composition or of the soul's connection to it. Just so, in Orpheus, Kore, who is the guardian of all things sown, is portrayed as working at the loom; and the ancients also spoke of the heaven as a robe, as if it were the garment of the heavenly gods.

Porphyry's explanation of Homer's verses in terms of the process of bodily creation alludes to Plato's discussion, in the *Timaeus*, on the formation of the human body, particularly his detailed account of the locations of the two mortal parts of the soul in the human body in *Timaeus* 69d-72d, and of the unequal allotment of flesh to the body parts in *Timaeus* 74e-75c. In the first of these two passages, in accordance with the Demiurge's shaping of the rational part of the human soul that is divine and composed of the same mixture as the world soul (*Tim.* 41d), the Demiurge assigns to his own offspring the fabrication of the mortal parts (*Tim.* 69c). They imitate the Demiurge: having received the immortal principle of the soul, the gods created by the Demiurge work like artisans. They firstly shape a mortal body by covering the immortal part of the soul within a round mortal body. The head, including the divine part of the soul, is the equivalent of the spherical body of the cosmos (*Tim.* 44d-45b).[66] The entire body, the torso and limbs, is created as a vehicle (ὄχημα, *Tim.* 44e2 and 69c7) to bear the head because, contrary to the body of the cosmos, it is in need of being carried to be movable.

66 Cornford (1997), 280–1 with n. 1; Zeyl (2000), 63.

As set out in *Timaeus* 42a, the soul, in the process of implantation into the body constructed by the gods, inevitably develops harmful feelings and emotions as a result of sense-perception, and starts to experience desire mingled with pleasure and pain and fear and temper. In order to define where emotions and appetites are situated in the body, Plato employs a vertically hierarchical classification similar to the sub-division of a house into male and female quarters (*Tim.* 69e3-70a2). The part of the soul which reveals manly spirit and contentiousness is situated closer to the head, between the midriff and the neck (*Tim.* 70a2-7), whereas the part which is inferior to the spirited part, and is ruled by appetites and other bodily needs, is situated between the midriff and the navel (*Tim.* 70d7-e). The spirited part of the body is superior in its proximity to heaven, and it constitutes the male part because of its manly attitudes. The appetitive part represents the lower mortal part due to its proximity to the Earth[67] and constitutes the female part of the body because of the Earth's nourishing properties.

In the process of bodily creation (*Tim.* 74e-75a), necessity (ἀνάγκη) predominates over Intelligence (νοῦς): the Demiurge makes a choice between the brevity of human life with the superior Intelligence, and the longevity of human life with inferior intelligence. Otherwise, the Demiurge is not able to fulfil the reconciliation between abundant flesh and bones, and keen and quick perception.[68] The possession of dense flesh indicates the incapability of receiving rational commands, and becomes a kind of barrier which prevents the soul from using its intellectual capacity. Proclus' quotation of Porphyry's comment on *Timaeus* 24b4-7 (F 18 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.156.24-31 Diehl), in which he discusses the meanings of shields and spears, symbols, used by the ancients in the story of Atlantis, of those who fall into *genesis* and involve themselves with matter, shows his view about the effect of the body on the function of intellect:[69]

> Πορφύριος μὲν ἀσπίδα τὸ σῶμα καλῶν ἀντὶ τοῦ δόρατος παραλαμβάνει τὸν θυμόν· ταῦτα δὲ εἰς γένεσιν πεσόντων ἐστὶ καὶ ἐνύλων πραγμάτων, καὶ οὐχὶ τῆς ἀτρέπτου σωτηρίας, ἀλλὰ τῆς γενεσιουργοῦ ζωῆς ὄργανα, διαφθείροντα τὴν καθαρότητα τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τὴν κατὰ λόγον ἀπολλύντα ζωήν.
>
> Porphyry calls the shield the body, and for the spear he understands the spirited element, and these things belong to those who fall into

67 Krell (1975), 418.

68 Cornford (1997), 297–8; Steel (2001), 109–12; Carone (2005), 40.

69 Trans. Tarrant (2007), 253–4 with minor corrections; Dillon (2009), 285 for a comparison of Porphyry's and Iamblichus' comments.

> generation and into enmattered things, and they are the instruments not of unflinching preservation but of reproductive life, corrupting the purity of intellect and destroying the rational life.

In this passage, Porphyry expresses his view that the body and spirit are what ruins the purity of the mind and the life in accordance with reason. As in this passage, Porphyry also uses the verb πίπτω in *De Antro* 28.7 (εἰς γένεσιν πέσωσιν) where he refers to Numenius and the 'people of dreams,' and associates the Milky Way with milk as nourishment of those falling into *genesis*.[70]

As regards Naiad nymphs, because they are mythical female entities at the lowest ontological rank, and due to their generative powers, as Porphyry states in *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, they are assigned to the task of the creation of the body in *De Antro*. In line with Homer's description of the Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple cloaks, sea-purple cloaks is a reference to the corporeal parts of the body with flesh, and they are active in the formation of the body parts composed of dense flesh. This claim finds support from *De Antro* 14.6, in which they are particularly connected to the activity of 'making flesh,' ἡ σαρκοποιία, on bones and around bones. By interpreting Homer's image of Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple cloaks as referring to body-creation, Porphyry echoes an interesting comparison between Homer's representation of traditional 'craftwomanship' with Hesiod's story of the creation of Pandora in *Op.* 60-64, where Hephaestus mixes earth with water to form a maiden-shape, and Athena then, first of all, teaches the new creature to 'weave richly-worked cloth (πολυδαίδαλον ἱστὸν ὑφαίνειν). Weaving (ὑφαίνειν) is an image that also occurs in the context of embodiment in the *Timaeus*. For example, in *Timaeus* 41d1-2, the Demiurge commands his offspring gods to 'weave' (προσυφαίνοντες) the mortal with the immortal in order to create the mortal living beings; in *Timaeus* 72c7, the spleen is called a loosely 'woven' organ (ὑφανθέντος).[71]

Given Porphyry's interpretation of the Naiad nymphs' weaving as the formation of flesh and the emphasis on the mortal status of the product of the gods' weaving assignment in *Timaeus* 41d1-3, in *De Antro*, too, flesh is a symbol of the perishability of the human body. That the formation of flesh (σαρκογονία) happens through blood and from blood in *De Antro* 14.10 is corroborated by the idea of Naiad nymphs presiding over water and the power or faculty (*dunamis*) of their creation of flesh with the liquid state of blood. After a brief mention of the necessity of maintaining our last garment pure, in a passage in

70 Edwards (1996), 94 says, 'Numenius takes this phrase to mean, not the dead, but the blind majority of the living.'

71 See also Cornford (1997), 140–2 and 289–90.

De Abstinentia (2.46.8-47.1) Porphyry says that the perceptible body has effluences of *daimones* of matter (ἀπορροίας φέροντος δαιμονίων ὑλικῶν), that is the flow of blood in the body.[72] Bad *daimones*, Naiad nymphs, are related to flesh and blood that are the cause of the impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) because they are responsible for generation and corruption.[73]

To understand the role and function of blood in the body, it is now time to explore how Porphyry distinguishes the parts of the soul and the powers (or faculties) of the body. Porphyry, like Plotinus, uses Plato's tripartite division of the soul to support his analysis of the ethical disposition of the soul.[74] Since the soul is indivisible in essence, this essence, as an unattached incorporeal entity, is the same in all its manifestations.[75] According to Plotinus, the soul is 'divisible among bodies' because of its descent, but it is also indivisible because it does not entirely participate in the process of descent (*Enn.* 4.1.9-13). In his *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων* (F 253.11-18 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.25a.12-18), Porphyry discusses parts and powers of the soul, and explicitly says that the idea that 'the soul has parts' is nothing but the expression of the moral character of the soul, and a misunderstanding of Plato's and Aristotle's assertions by the philosophers:

> Παρὰ δὲ Πλάτωνι καὶ Ἀριστοτέλει ἐν τοῖς Ἠθικοῖς τριμερὴς ἡ ψυχὴ λέγεται εἶναι, καὶ κεκράτηκε τοῦτο παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν ὡς ἡ διαίρεσις τῆς συστάσεως ἕνεκα τῶν ἀρετῶν παρείληπται· οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς εἰς σύλληψιν πάντων τῶν μερῶν. Τὸ γὰρ φανταστικὸν καὶ αἰσθητικὸν καὶ τὸ νοερὸν καὶ <τὸ> φυτικὸν οὐ δήπου ἐν τῇ διαιρέσει ταύτῃ περιληφθήσεται.
>
> In the ethical works of Plato and Aristotle the soul is said to be tripartite, and this division prevails in many philosophers, but they fail to understand that the division was used for the sake of the constitution of virtues. Indeed, it does not take into account all parts because it does not include imaginative, intellective and vegetative faculties in this division.

In another surviving passage of *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων* (F 253.37-42 Smith), we find the discussion of 'parts' and multiple powers of the soul. Porphyry reports the idea of Longinus, a disciple of Ammonius (3rd century C.E.), on this

72 Eur., *Hel.* 1587; Pl., *Phaedrus* 251b.

73 Clark (2000), 158 n. 333.

74 See above the discussion on F 13 Sodano and Procl., *In Tim.* 1.116.26-117.18 Diehl for Porphyry; Blumenthal (1969), 21–2 for Plotinus.

75 Blumenthal (1969), 14–15; Smith (1974), 2–4.

issue, asserting that the embodied soul has multiple powers (πολυδύναμος)[76] but is indivisible (ἀμερής). After this, Porphyry deems those who say that the soul has parts in a quantitative sense to be mistaken (F 253.77-87 Smith). He quotes from Nicolaus of Damascus (1st century B.C.E.), who considers 'the parts of the soul to be powers of the body that holds it' (τὰ μέρη τῆς ψυχῆς ὡς δυνάμεις τοῦ ἔχοντος), such as to live, to perceive, to move, to think, to yearn, the cause of all of which is the soul (F 253.88-109 Smith). In agreement with Longinus and Nicolaus of Damascus, Porphyry concludes that the soul has parts when it is in relation with body, allthough it is partless in itself (F 253.110-122 Smith).[77] Once again, it is clear that Porphyry's identification of the Naiad nymphs as *dunameis* implies that their capacity relates to body, however, this capacity is acquired only by the union of the soul with the body. At this point, it is not wrong to assume that the power of blood should not be allocated to any part of the embodied soul; rather, this power should be allocated to the embodied soul as a whole, since blood flows through the bodies of all living beings. However, the effect of this power varies according to the ethical disposition of the soul, as it may have more effect on the appetitive part of the soul than the spirited part and less effect on the rational part of the soul than the spirited part.

As regards the statement in *De Antro* 10.20-11.1 that 'blood and moist seed are dear to [the souls]' (αἷμά τε γὰρ ταύταις καὶ ὁ δίυγρος γόνος φίλος), Porphyry's depiction of the process of embodiment in *De Antro* 14 might be read according to the development of seeds, or embryos, in women's wombs. There are, in Porphyry's view, five stages in the development of a seed:[78] (1) conception, the stage in which the seed is preserved by the womb; (2) first formation, which includes the articulation of limbs and organs; (3) first movement; (4) full articulation, which includes the articulation of nails and hair; and (5) birth (Porphyry, *Ad Gaurum* 2). It is reasonable to assume that 'making flesh' (σαρκοποιία) belongs to the first formation stage, in which limbs are articulated, because we know that 'making flesh' takes place on bones and around bones.

There are three traditional theories that consider the corporeal origin of the seed: the first and oldest, called the *encephalomyelogenic* theory, was accepted by Alcmaeon (24 A 13 DK), the Pythagoreans and Hippon (38 A 12 DK). It says that the origin of the seed is brain and bone marrow.[79] The second theory is

76 It is a common Neoplatonic term after Porphyry and Iamblichus, which occurs in F 253.38 and F 253.48 Smith. See also Finamore (2002), 109.

77 See for a detailed discussion of this fragment ibid., 108–12.

78 Wilberding (2011), 32–3 and (2010), 44. See also Wilberding (2015), 321–61 for the Neoplatonic theory of embryology: the female rather than the male as the active cause of reproduction in contrast to those of Aristotle, Galen and Hippocratic authors.

79 Wilberding (2008), 409 and (2010), 43.

the theory of *pangenesis*. Approved by Democritus, the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* and Epicurus,[80] it states that the seed is obtained from every part of the body. Porphyry clearly adopts the third theory, *hematogenesis*, in which the seed is believed to originate from blood.[81] In his *Ad Gaurum* (7.2), Porphyry says that 'nature extracts some part of this blood and turns it into seed by reproducing its own form principles in the thing coming to be.'[82] So, the doctrine of *hematogenesis* coincides with Porphyry's statement that 'the formation of flesh happens through blood and from blood' in *De Antro* 14.10. Blood is indeed one of the first substances in the formation of the body and it constitutes the generative power of the female principle, which is in the case of *De Antro* represented by the Naiad nymphs.

Porphyry denies that the embryo is ensouled when it is in the womb, but asserts that it only becomes at the moment of birth (F 266 Smith = Iamblichus, *De Anima* 31 = ap. Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.41.1-6 = Numenius, F 36 des Places = Test. 48 Leemans):[83]

> Κατὰ δ' Ἱπποκράτην, τὸν τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν, ὅταν πλασθῇ τὸ σπέρμα (τότε γὰρ ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν αὐτὸ μεταλαμβάνειν ζωῆς), κατὰ δὲ Πορφύριον ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἀπογεννήσει τοῦ τικτομένου πρώτως ἡ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ζωοποιία καὶ παρουσία τῆς ψυχῆς φύεται.
>
> According to Hippocrates the Asclepiad, life is actually created and the soul becomes present when the sperm is formed into an embryo (for it is then suitably disposed to share in life), while according to Porphyry it is as soon as the child is born.

In Psellus' *De Omnifaria Doctrina* 115 (F 267 Smith), Porphyry is said to have asserted that the embryo is not nourished by soul but by nature in the same way as plants. Nourishment is provided by the mother because of the embryo's incapability of feeding itself due to the fact that it is not, as yet, ensouled. However, this is only true up to a point: it is clear from Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum* (4) that the embryo has a part of the assumption is also contradicted by Porphyry's statement in *De Antro* 10.20-11.1, where Porphyry draws a traditional analogy between the soul falling into *genesis* and the soul of plants: the former needs 'blood and moist seed' (αἷμά τε καὶ ὁ δίυγρος γόνος) just as the latter needs water.

80 Wilberding (2008), 409 n. 11.
81 Diogenes of Apollonia, 64 B 6 DK; Arist., *De Gen. Anim.* 724a14-19; Galen, *De Semine* 1.12.
82 Trans. Wilberding (2011), 40.
83 Trans. Finamore (2002), 59 and 163–4.

This too, by assuming appetite, presupposes a process which is more than purely physiological. Furthermore, Porphyry's usage of γόνος in *De Antro* 11.1 is reminiscent of Plato's usage of τοῦ γεννᾶν in *Timaeus* 91b4 in which he states that the seed (marrow) creates a life-giving desire for generation because it has soul in it (cf. *Tim.* 73c). In *Ad Gaurum* 4, Porphyry also refers to Plato's description of the seed, which has a lively desire (ζωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, *Tim.* 91b3), saying that the appetitive part is dominated by pleasure and pain, and yearns for food and nourishment. Until birth, either the seed or the embryo partakes in the third part of the soul located between the midriff and the navel. As Wilberding states, both the embryo and sprouting plants are the result of a physical process; they do not, yet, have any conscious sensation, and plants, which have no self-moving soul, never develop beyond this stage. The embryo, however, is in the physiological phase while it is in the womb, in the sense that it partakes in the vegetative part of the soul, including pleasure and pain, a phase which occurs in the body. At birth, the embryo enters into the phase of full participation in soul, which occurs in the soul.[84] It is plausible to assume that Porphyry's interpretation of Homer's description of the Naiad nymphs weaving sea-purple garments conceives the process of embodiment in the same way as he conceived the development of embryos which are in the womb and in the physiological phase.

3 The Pneumatic Body

The idea of an intermediary link between the soul and the body, and of assigning an astral body to all souls was developed by the Neoplatonists from the concepts of *ochema* (ὄχημα), 'vehicle of the soul,' found in Plato's *Timaeus* 41e, and of the Aristotelian *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), which is the place of the nutritive, sensitive and imaginative soul, generated from a fifth element, *aithêr*, from which the stars are made (*De Gen. Anim.* 736b37-38).[85] *Pneuma* is also called πνευματικὸν ὄχημα and αὐγοειδε`ς σῶμα, among other terms, and can be defined as the semi-corporeal entity situated between the soul and body. *Pneuma* is one of the key concepts for understanding the soul's union with the body, and

84 See F 6 Sodano (= Procl., *In Tim.* 1.51.9-13 Diehl) for Porphyry's refutation of Longinus' view that 'the souls are deposited along with the sperm,' trans. Tarrant (2007), 145; cf. trans. Johnson (2013), 323: 'Porphyry begins to follow Longinus in thinking that souls are implanted at conception.' Wilberding (2008), 411–12.

85 Kissling (1922), 318–30; Dodds (1963), 315–18 for an elaborative discussion of the origin of the theory; Smith (1974), 152–8; Schibli (1993), 163–5.

we know that Porphyry and the later Neoplatonists attached great importance to the subject.[86]

De Antro 11.8-12.1 is a significant passage, albeit brief and not original, in confirming some fundamental points of the theory of *pneuma-ochema*. The analysis here embraces other texts of Porphyry, particularly *Sententia* 29 which is a complementary text to *De Antro* 11.8-12.1, explaining what is implied in *De Antro*, and the fragmentary works of Porphyry, especially F 290 Smith from *De Animae Regressu*, and F 377 and F 378 Smith from *On the Styx*. In *De Antro*, Porphyry provides significant information as to how the soul unites with the body as follows:

> (11.8-12.1) ἀνάγκη τοίνυν καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἤτοι σωματικὰς οὔσας ἢ ἀσωμάτους μέν, ἐφελκομένας δὲ σῶμα, καὶ μάλιστα τὰς μελλούσας καταδεῖσθαι εἴς τε αἷμα καὶ δίυγρα σώματα ῥέπειν πρὸς τὸ ὑγρὸν καὶ σωματοῦσθαι ὑγρανθείσας. διὸ καὶ χολῆς καὶ αἵματος ἐκχύσει προτρέπεσθαι τὰς τῶν τεθνηκότων, καὶ τάς γε φιλοσωμάτους ὑγρὸν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐφελκομένας παχύνειν τοῦτο ὡς νέφος· ὑγρὸν γὰρ ἐν ἀέρι παχυνθὲν νέφος συνίσταται· παχυνθέντος δ' ἐν αὐταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑγροῦ πλεονασμῷ ὁρατὰς γίνεσθαι. καὶ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων αἳ συναντῶσί τισι κατὰ φαντασίαν χρώζουσαι τὸ πνεῦμα εἰδώλων ἐμφάσεις, αἱ μέντοι καθαραὶ γενέσεως ἀπότροποι. αὐτὸς δέ φησιν Ἡράκλειτος ‘ξηρὰ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη.’ διὸ κἀνταῦθα κατὰ τὰς τῆς μίξεως ἐπιθυμίας δίυγρον καὶ νοτερώτερον γίνεσθαι τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀτμὸν ἐφελκομένης δίυγρον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν νεύσεως.
>
> (11.8-12.1) Accordingly, it is also necessary for souls, whether they are embodied or not embodied but attracting (ἐφελκομένας) some corporeal substance, and especially those soul which are about to be bound to blood and moist bodies, to incline towards moisture, and to become embodied after having been moistened. Consequently, the souls of the dead are urged on by pouring out bile and blood, and body-loving souls drag (ἐφελκομένας) the moist spirit along with them and thicken it like a cloud; for moisture in the air, when thickened, forms into a cloud. And when the spirit in them has been thickened by excessive moisture, they become visible. And it is from such souls that the images of phantoms come which occur to people, tainting their spirits in accordance with their fantasies. However, the pure souls avert *genesis*. Herakleitos himself says: 'the dry soul is the wisest.' And so also here (in the material world), because of longing for sexual intercourse, the spirit becomes more wet

86 Smith (1974), 152.

> and moist, as the soul attracts (ἐφελκομένας) a moist vapour from its descent in the direction of *genesis*.

Here, note particularly the use of the verb ἐφέλκομαι in *De Antro* 11.9-10, 11.13-14, and 11.20, a common technical term associated with the theory of *pneuma-ochema*, which Porphyry also uses in a similar context further on, in *De Antro* 25.3 (ἐφέλκεσθαι) and in other works, such as *Sententia* (29.7, 29.13, 29.33, 29.38, and 29.39) and *Ad Gaurum* (11.3.13-14).[87] The passage in question begins with Porphyry's implicit approval of the two fundamental points of the theory (*De Antro* 11.8-12.1). Firstly, the pneumatic vehicle can be either immaterial or material, according to its level of purity. It is invisible in the state of purity, whereas it becomes visible or material, particularly with in the soul's last garment, flesh and blood (*De Abstinentia* 2.46).[88] Porphyry describes the soul attracting to it moist spirit as the body-loving soul, φιλοσώματος, and this usage is very rare in his extant works.[89] In *Ad Marcellam* 14.5-6, Porphyry mentions the impossibility of loving both God and pleasure and the body (ἀδύνατον τὸν αὐτὸν φιλόθεόν τε εἶναι καὶ φιλήδονον καὶ φιλοσώματον). This impossibility leads people to be impious towards God and their ancestors.

Porphyry then restates the idea that the pneumatic vehicle is a compound of the irrational soul and body because the lower part of the soul is in need of a 'corporeal substance' (σωματικὰς οὔσας, *De Antro* 11.9) in the process of embodiment. In *De Antro* 11.8-12.1, Porphyry explains in broad terms how the process of embodiment occurs through the soul's dampness, and he clearly identifies *pneuma* with the irrational soul which has a tendency towards *genesis*. According to Augustine's report in *De Civitate Dei* 10.9 (= *De Regressu Animae* F 290 Smith), Porphyry also identified the concept of *pneuma* (*anima spiritualis*) with the irrational soul which is incapable of obtaining immortality and eternity in contrast with the rational soul (*anima rationalis* and/or *intellectualis*):

> utilem dicit esse mundanae parti animae, non quidem intellectuali, qua rerum intellegibilium percipitur ueritas, nullas habentium similitudines corporum; sed spiritali, qua corporalium rerum capiuntur imagines. Hanc enim dicit per quasdam consecrationes theurgicas, quas teletas uocant, idoneam fieri atque aptam susceptioni spirituum et angelorum et ad uidendos deos. Ex quibus tamen theurgicis teletis fatetur intellectuali animae nihil purgationis accedere, quod eam faciat idoneam ad

87 See also Simonini (2010), 124–5.

88 See the previous section.

89 *Ad Marcellam* 14.6, trans. Zimmern (1986), 48.

> uidendum Deum suum et perspicienda ea, quae uere sunt. Ex quo intellegi potest, qualium deorum uel qualem uisionem fieri dicat theurgicis consecrationibus, in qua non ea uidentur, quae uere sunt. Denique animam rationalem siue, quod magis amat dicere, intellectualem, in sua posse dicit euadere, etiamsi quod eius spiritale est nulla theurgica fuerit arte purgatum; porro autem a theurgo spiritalem purgari hactenus, ut non ex hoc ad inmortalitatem aeternitatemque perueniat.
>
> He (Porphyry) says that it (theurgy) is useful for the part of the soul that requires cleansing, not indeed the intellectual part, by which the truth of the intelligible beings is conceived, that have no similitude to the bodies; but the spiritual (pneumatic) part, by which the images of corporeal things are captured. This part, he says, through certain theurgic consecrations which they call mystic rites, becomes suitable and appropriate for receipt of spirits and angels, and for seeing gods. However, he shows that from these theurgic rites no purification happens to the intellectual soul in order to make it suitable for seeing its God, and for examining what really exists. From this it can be understood what kind of gods these are, or he would say what kind of apparition is performed by theurgic consecrations, in which what really exists is not seen. Accordingly, he says that the rational soul or rather, as he likes calling it, the intellectual soul, can ascend to its own place, even though its spiritual (pneumatic) part has not been purified by theurgic art. On the other hand, though the spiritual part may be purified by a theurgist, yet it cannot reach immortality and eternity.

The distinction between the rational and the pneumatic part is also found in *De Civitate Dei* 10.27 (= F 287 Smith), in which it is explained that the purification of the pneumatic part of the soul is achieved through theurgic rites and of the rational part through philosophy.

Porphyry likens the becoming moist of the pneumatic part to a natural phenomenon, namely the formation of clouds through condensation.[90] A thick, heavy and moist *pneuma* of the soul symbolises a life which is enslaved to the sensitive and material passions, including excessive desire for food, sleep, sex, wealth, fame, and so on. Porphyry's 'cloud-*pneuma*' analogy is reminiscent of Apuleius' *De Deo Socratis* 10, where he draws a parallel between clouds 'being replete with moisture' (*si aliquo umore fecundae sunt*) and a 'fetus being brought forth' (*veluti ad fetum edendum*), both of them showing a 'downward movement' (*deorsus degrassantur*).

90 Synesius, *De Insomniis* 10.15-16: τὸ ὁμιχλῶδες τοῦ πνεύματος.

Porphyry's reference to Heraclitus in *De Antro* 11.18-19 (22 B 118 DK), on the other hand, implies a thin, light and dry *pneuma* as symbol of a life which is dedicated to philosophy and ethical values. The comparison between the wet and the dry *pneuma* is found in *Sententia* 29.40-43, which we may liken to a blurry and clear mind, respectively. Porphyry considers the dry *pneuma* to be the soul's avoidance of nature, a dry light without a shadow and cloud (ὅταν δὲ μελετήσῃ ἀφίστασθαι φύσεως, αὐγὴ ξηρὰ γίνεται, ἄσκιος καὶ ἀνέφελος).

It is clear that a dry kind of *pneuma* enables the soul to ascend to the intelligible world because of its state of purity, whereas a moist and dark *pneuma* pulls the soul towards the underworld. Porphyry explains the expression 'the soul being in Hades' in *Sententia* 29, saying that the descent into Hades signifies a downward propensity of the dark and heavy *pneuma*, which consequently leads the soul to dark places under the Earth. Porphyry uses ὑπόγειος and σκοτεινός in various places in both *Sententia* 29 and *De Antro*.[91] The former implies the western region assigned to *daimones* in accordance with *De Antro* 29.8, as previously discussed. Hades metaphorically shows the region below the fixed stars and the seven planets, corresponding to the cave of the nymphs. On the other hand, σκοτεινός indicates the key feature of the material world as discussed in the previous chapter, and of the pneumatic part of the soul. Thus, Hades and the cave of the nymphs are dwellings where the pneumatic bodies subsist, as Porphyry explains in *Sententia* 29.14-22:[92]

> ἐν Ἅιδου δὲ λέγεται, ὅτι τῆς ἀιδοῦς φύσεως ἐτύγχανε τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ σκοτεινῆς. Ἐπεὶ δὲ διήκει τὸ βαρὺ πνεῦμα καὶ ἔνυγρον ἄχρι τῶν ὑπογείων τόπων, οὕτω καὶ αὕτη λέγεται χωρεῖν ὑπὸ γῆν οὐχ ὅτι ἡ αὐτῆς οὐσία μεταβαίνει τόπους καὶ ἐν τόποις γίνεται, ἀλλ' ὅτι τῶν πεφυκότων σωμάτων τόπους μεταβαίνειν καὶ εἰληχέναι τόπου σχέσεις ἀναδέχεται, δεχομένων αὐτὴν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιτηδειότητας τῶν τοιούτων σωμάτων ἐκ τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν ποιᾶς διαθέσεως.

> it (the soul) is said to be in Hades, because its pneumatic vehicle is of an invisible and murky nature. But since a pneumatic vehicle that is heavy and humid penetrates as far as the regions beneath the earth, it is thus that the soul also is said to go beneath the earth: not because its essence changes from place to place, and comes to be in places, but rather because it contracts relations with bodies whose nature it is to change from place to place and to have a place assigned to them, such bodies

91 ὑπόγειος: *Sententia* 29.5, 29.17, and 29.40, *De Antro* 29.8; σκοτεινός: *Sententia* 29.6 and 29.15, *De Antro* 3.6, 3.16, 5.13, 6.2, 7.3, 9.4, 9.10, 12.6, and 33.6.

92 Trans. Dillon (2005), 806.

> receiving soul according to their capacities, in virtue of that soul's particular disposition.

In accordance with *Sententia* 29, the soul does not present itself in the same manner as the body because of the immaterial nature of the soul. The souls which have fallen into the sublunary region are now in the cave of the nymphs according to *De Antro*, or in Hades, according to *Sententia* 29. Porphyry's statement that the souls 'preside over their image' (ὅταν προεστήκῃ εἰδώλου, *Sententia* 29.3-4), is also reminiscent of the Naiad nymphs presiding over the waters in *De Antro*. The dark nature of this image enables the soul to be attuned to the material world, and provides the union of the soul and body through self-attraction. As Chase states,[93] the pneumatic part of the soul metamorphoses into an image characterised by dark and moist vapours. As in *De Antro* 11, as we have seen, there exists a close relation between *pneuma* and the desire for 'intercourse' (μίξις); we can thus conclude that the pneumatic part of the soul operates as a catalyst, wet and moist during the descent of the soul into *genesis*, while the soul attracts a moist vapour which is nothing other than its own *pneuma*.

Porphyry, like Plotinus (*Enn.* 4.3.15), thinks that the pneumatic part of the soul is obtained in heaven, and according to Dodds, this idea may be traced back to Posidonius.[94] Porphyry classifies the four major phases of the pneumatic part of the soul during the process of its descent into *genesis*, when the soul receives different substances.[95] Firstly, the aethereal body is generated from the substances of the first five planets because of the similarity of its nature to the immaterial. Of the second and third substances, the solar and lunar bodies, obtained from the Sun and the Moon, 'appearance' (φαντασία) predominates over reason in the former, femininity and desire prevail in the latter. The fourth substance is the heavy and moist *pneuma* generated from 'exhalation' (ἀναθυμίασις) in the sublunary region, showing the process of embodiment of the soul, as is explained in *Sententia* 29.22-31:[96]

> ὡς γὰρ ἂν διατεθῇ, εὑρίσκει σῶμα τάξει καὶ τόποις οἰκείοις διωρισμένον· διὸ καθαρώτερον μὲν διακειμένῃ σύμφυτον τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀύλου σῶμα, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ αἰθέριον, προελθούσῃ δὲ ἐκ λόγου εἰς φαντασίας προβολὴν σύμφυτον τὸ ἡλιοειδές, θηλυνθείσῃ δὲ καὶ παθαινομένῃ πρὸς τὸ εἶδος παράκειται τὸ

93 Chase (2004b), 13 n. 38.
94 Dodds (1963), 366.
95 Chase (2004b), 25 n.72.
96 Johnson (2013), 121, trans. Dillon.

> σεληνοειδές, πεσούσῃ δὲ εἰς σώματα, ὅταν κατὰ τὸ αὐτῶν ἄμορφον στῇ εἶδος, ἐξ ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμιάσεων συνεστηκότα, ἄγνοια ἔπεται τοῦ ὄντος τελεία καὶ σκότωσις καὶ νηπιότης.
>
> For in fact, it is in accordance with its disposition that it finds a body of a definite rank and assigned to areas proper to it: that is why, when its condition is sufficiently pure, it gravitates naturally to a body close to immaterial, that is, an aetherial one, while if it proceeds down from reason to the projection of imagination, it inclines naturally to a solar body; and when it becomes feminine and subject to passion a lunar one is standing ready for it as suitable to its form; but when it falls into bodies, as it comes to rest at the level of their unlovely form, constituted as they are from exhalations, there ensues complete ignorance of true being and black-out and puerility.

The aethereal body becomes darkened gradually as it descends through the sublunary region and finally acquires its earthly body. As Porphyry remarks in *Sententia* 29.30-31, the soul, in turn, suffers from a complete ignorance of true being as if it were a newborn. Porphyry's association of the pneumatic part with the function of *phantasia* in his works, in *De Antro* (11.16-17) and *Sententiae* (29.25-26), is reminiscent of the ignorant prisoners who dwell in the Platonic cave, and are convinced that the reality is nothing other than shadows and reflections of images (*Rep*. 514a-515c).

Porphyry contrasts the pneumatic part of the soul upon which 'images' (εἴδωλα) are imprinted, to the rational part of the soul, by which the intelligibles are conceived.[97] However, it is quite difficult to understand in what way the images are imprinted on *pneuma*. Two fragments, F 377 and F378 Smith from Porphyry's *On the Styx*,[98] preserved in Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (1.49.53.53-70 and 1.49.54) are significant in this context because, in them, Porphyry establishes a close connection between the capability of thought and memory, and blood. Porphyry remarks that humans need blood to speak and think about human things, illustrating this with the fact that the Odyssean Tiresias, as a soul in the underworld, cannot prophesy without drinking blood, even though he retains 'human reasoning' (τὸν λογισμὸν τὸν ἀνθρώπινον). Blood, therefore, has the power or capacity to enable humans to think about mortal things. In addition to looking at the Homeric works, Porphyry himself must certainly

97 Smith (1974), 155–6; Dillon (2004), 201 n.9; Chase (2004b), 37–58.

98 Johnson (2013), 31–7 includes the discussion that *On the Cave of the Nymphs* and *On the Styx* might be similar interpretive exercises.

have witnessed that, either excessive or insufficient blood (being angry or faint) causes the loss of some sensible abilities and, consequently, the loss of intellectual abilities, (F 377 Smith):[99]

> Τῶν δ' ἐντὸς τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ ἀφῃρημένων τὸν λογισμὸν τὸν ἀνθρώπινον μόνος ὁ Τειρεσίας καὶ τοῦτον ἔχει παρόντα· οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἀλλήλους μὲν γιγνώσκουσι κατ' ἰδιότητα φρονήσεως ἣν ἐν Ἅιδου κέκτηνται, τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους οὐκέτι· οὐδ' ἂν φθέγξαιντο περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων τοῖς ζῶσιν ἔτι ἀνθρώποις, εἰ μὴ ἀτμοῦ μεταλάβοιεν αἵματος καὶ τούτῳ φρενωθεῖεν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, ἃ δὴ οἱ ἔξω καὶ μὴ πιόντες τοῦ αἵματος φρονοῦσι, κατάστασιν ἔχοντες τῆς ἐξ αἱμοποσίας τῶν θνητῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς γιγνομένης γνωρίσεως. Τειρεσίας δὲ ἔχει μὲν λογισμὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, μαντεύεται δ' οὐδ' αὐτὸς περὶ τῶν εἱμαρμένων τοῖς ζῶσι πρὶν πιεῖν τοῦ αἵματος. Οἴεται γὰρ καὶ Ὅμηρος, [καθὰ καὶ πλεῖστοι τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν ὑπέλαβον], ἐν τῷ αἵματι εἶναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν περὶ τὰ θνητὰ φρόνησιν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν πολλοὶ τοῦτο πιστοῦνται δεικνύντες ὅτι καὶ ὑπερθερμανθὲν ὑπὸ πυρετοῦ καὶ χολῆς ἀφραίνειν ποιεῖ καὶ ἀνοηταίνειν.
>
> Of those who are within the river and have abandoned human reasoning Tiresias alone possesses this too as present to him; but the others recognize each other by the particular way of thinking which they have obtained in Hades, but they no longer recognize humans. Nor would they speak about human things to those humans still living, unless they receive the vapor of blood and thereby think human things, which those outside also think though they do not drink of the blood, since they have the condition of the knowledge that occurs in the souls of mortals from drinking blood. But Tiresias has the reasoning of humans and yet does not himself prophesy about the things fated for the living until he drinks the blood. For Homer too thinks {as a great many of those after him also suppose} that for humans thinking about mortal things is in their blood, since many of those after him also confirm this, showing that when [the blood] becomes excessively hot by the heat and bile it makes one senseless and unthinking.

Elsewhere, (F 378.10-15 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.54.10-15), Porphyry confirms that 'appearance' (φαντασία) arises from memory, referring to Plato's *Philebus* 39a. That memory is taken away results in the images formed also being taken away. Thus, bodily sufferings of the soul are also eliminated as a result of the loss of the connection between memory and images. Porphyry also

99 Trans. Johnson (2013), 335.

restates the association between blood, memory and appearances (F 378.35-38 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.54.34-37), again with reference to Homer:

> Τὸ δ' αἷμα, ὡς ἔφημεν, ὁλκὸν Ὅμηρος ἡγεῖται τῆς φανταστικῆς καὶ μνημονικῆς ψυχῆς, ἧς καὶ ὁ λογισμός, συναγερμὸς ὢν μνήμης διὰ φαντασιῶν εἰς τὰ καθόλου κρίματα κεφαλαιουμένης.
>
> Homer, as we said, deems blood to be attractive to the imaginative and reminiscent soul, which also possesses reason, which is a gathering together of memory as summarised into universal judgements through appearances.

During the last level of the process of embodiment, blood, the essence of the garment of the soul, is the substance which is essential to activate memory, and it functions as a pneumatic vehicle since it attracts to itself the soul and appearance. Considering Porphyry's identification of Homer's 'Naiad nymphs weaving a sea-purple garment' with the formation of the body through blood and from blood in *De Antro* 14.10, it is appropriate to say that blood enables 'images' (εἴδωλα) to be imprinted on the pneumatic part of the soul and that blood allows the earthly life of the soul to commence.

4 Honey as Symbol of Pleasure: a Trap

This section analyses *De Antro* 16.8-17.1 in which Porphyry uses 'pleasure' (ἡδονή), for the first time in the text. Pleasure leads Kronos to fall into *genesis* by a trap set by the primeval goddess Night and Kronos' son, Zeus. In order to show the effect of overeating on the soul, Porphyry draws an analogy between Poros (Wealth) and Kronos, both inebriated by the pleasure of nectar and honey, i.e., by excessive consumption. As a result of their inebriation, Poros engages in sexual intercourse with Penia (Poverty) in the garden of Zeus in Plato's *Symposium*, in Porphyry's conception, while Kronos falls into *genesis*.

After an outline of the Orphic cosmogony which begins with Chronos (Time) and ends with the sovereignty of Zeus, the section briefly discusses a possible source of the Orphic poem preserved in *De Antro* 16.13-14. Thereafter, it seeks to prove that Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus belong to the sublunary region, although they are usually considered to belong to higher realms in the Neoplatonic cosmology. It lastly focuses on the negative effect of overeating on the soul, as it causes the strengthening of the bond of the soul with the material world and prevents its rational part from operating properly. The analysis contains the relevant parts of *De Abstinentia*, which is a significant ancient

source defending vegetarianism on ethical and spiritual grounds, as well as *Miscellaneous Researches*, *Sententiae*, and Plato's *Republic* 7. Herein, the discussion begins with the quotation of *De Antro* 16.8-17.1:

> (16.8.17.1) παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ὀρφεῖ ὁ Κρόνος μέλιτι ὑπὸ Διὸς ἐνεδρεύεται· πλησθεὶς γὰρ μέλιτος μεθύει καὶ σκοτοῦται ὡς ἀπὸ οἴνου καὶ ὑπνοῖ ὡς παρὰ Πλάτωνι ὁ Πόρος τοῦ νέκταρος πλησθείς· 'οὔπω γὰρ οἶνος ἦν.' φησὶ γὰρ παρ' Ὀρφεῖ ἡ Νὺξ τῷ Διὶ ὑποτιθεμένη τὸν διὰ μέλιτος δόλον·
>
> 'εὖτ' ἂν δή μιν ἴδηαι ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν
> ἔργοισιν μεθύοντα μελισσάων ἐριβομβέων,
>
> δῆσον αὐτόν.' ὃ καὶ πάσχει ὁ Κρόνος καὶ δεθεὶς ἐκτέμνεται ὡς ὁ Οὐρανός, τοῦ θεολόγου δι' ἡδονῆς δεσμεῖσθαι καὶ κατάγεσθαι τὰ θεῖα εἰς γένεσιν αἰνισσομένου ἀποσπερματίζειν τε δυνάμεις εἰς τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐκλυθέντα. ὅθεν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μὲν συνουσίας τὸν Οὐρανὸν κατιόντα εἰς Γῆν ἐκτέμνει Κρόνος· ταὐτὸν δὲ τῇ ἐκ συνουσίας ἡδονῇ παρίστησιν αὐτοῖς ≤ἡ≥ τοῦ μέλιτος, ὑφ' οὗ δολωθεὶς ὁ Κρόνος ἐκτέμνεται. πρῶτος γὰρ τῶν ἀντιφερομένων τῷ Οὐρανῷ ὁ Κρόνος ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ τούτου σφαῖρα. κατίασι δὲ δυνάμεις ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πλανωμένων· ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δέχεται Κρόνος, τὰς δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ Κρόνου Ζεύς.
>
> (16.8.-17.1) According to Orpheus, Kronos is ensnared with honey by Zeus; for filled up with honey, he is stupefied and suffers from vertigo as if from wine, and sleeps just as Poros did in Plato, filled up with nectar – 'for there was as yet no wine.'[100] Since in Orpheus, the goddess of Night speaks to Zeus, offering him the treachery through honey:
>
> 'Whenever you see him under the oaks with lofty foliage
> drunken with the works of loud buzzing bees,
>
> bind him.' This is what happens, and Kronos is fettered and castrated like Ouranos. The theologian (Orpheus) hints that the divine principles are ensnared by pleasure and led down to *genesis*, and that they shed their powers (semen) after they have been dissolved in pleasure. So Kronos castrates Ouranos, who descends to Earth (Gaia, Rhea) with desire for sexual intercourse; for the ancients, the taste of honey represents the same thing as the desire of intercourse, by which Kronos is beguiled and castrated. For Kronos, with his sphere, is the first of those who are set against Ouranos. Powers descend from heaven and from those which are the planets; but Kronos receives those that come from Ouranos and Zeus receives them from Kronos.

100 Pl., *Symp*. 203b5-7.

In his analogy between Poros and Kronos, Porphyry depicts the former getting drunk on nectar and feeling drowsy (*Symp.* 203b5-7), and Kronos getting drunk on honey, which is the only account of the Orphic poem recording that Zeus traps Kronos by inebriating him with honey.[101] The Platonic and Orphic narratives correspond to a period of time in which wine had not as yet been created, as Dionysos had not as yet been born.[102] Porphyry evidently deems honey to be the food of the gods, the same as nectar, when he says that Homer calls honey 'ruddy nectar,' (νέκταρ ἐρυθρόν, *Il.* 19.38; *Od.* 5.93; *De Antro* 16.5-6), implying that the two have the same colour. In addition, he remarks that nectar and honey have the same effect on Poros and Kronos, making both inebriated. Furthermore, nectar and honey cause desire for sex. Consequently, in *Symposium* 203b, Poros and Penia engage in sexual intercourse in the garden of Zeus,[103] and in the Orphic poem which Porphyry quotes, Kronos is depicted as lying down under the oak tree which is one of the sacred symbols of Zeus in Greek mythology.[104]

Then, follows a discussion of the presumable source of the Orphic poem quoted by Porphyry and preserved in *De Antro* 16.8-17.1 (*OF* 154 Kern).[105] In his *De Principiis* (123–124), Damascius talks about the three different versions of the *Rhapsodies*, which are circulated under the name of Orpheus, that is, the theology of Hieronymus, Hellanicus and Eudemus of Rhodes.[106] Damascius is presumably referring here to the poem '*Sacred Discourse in Twenty-Four Rhapsodies*' ('Ιεροὺς λόγους ἐν ῥαψῳδίαις κδ,' Suda 654), which may have been written towards the end of the first century C.E.[107] He also says that one of the above-mentoned theologies is transmitted by the philosophers and found in the works of the Neoplatonists, particularly Proclus.

The generations and events of the *Rhapsodies* can be summarised as follows.[108] First, there exists Chronos (Time); Chronos begets Aither and Chaos or Chasma (*OF* 66 K = Procl., *In Remp*. 2.138.14-15 Kroll).[109] Chronos forms an

101 Athanassakis (2013), 101.

102 Ibid.

103 See *Cont. Cels.* 4.39 for Origen's identification of the garden of Zeus with paradise, Poros with Adam and Penia with the serpent.

104 *Od.* 14.328; see *De Abstinentia* 2.5 and 4.2 for Porphyry's remarks on the oak tree showing the frugality of the ancients.

105 F 187 II, F 220, F 222, and F 225 Bernabe.

106 Trans. Ahbel-Rappe (2010), 415–18; see also Alderink (1981), 36–7; West (1983), 68–70; Betegh (2006), 140.

107 Ahbel-Rappe (2010), 496 n. 80; see also West (1983), 229 on the date of the poem; Brisson (2004), 96.

108 For this summary see also Betegh (2006), 141–2.

109 F 105, F 111 I, F111 VII, F 111 IX, F 111 X, and F 116 Bernabe.

egg with Aither (*OF* 70 K = F 114 I–IV Bernabe = Damascius, *De Principiis* 55),[110] also referred to as a white tunic or cloud. Alternatively, the egg is the product of Aither and Chaos, as described by Damascius in *De Principiis* 123.1 and in Proclus' *In Timaeus* 1.428.4. The god, Phanes, comes out of the egg, and Damascius says, in *De Principiis* 123, that Phanes is also called Metis and Erikepaios (*OF* 81 K = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.429.30 Diehl);[111] in other sources this god is called Protogonos (*OF* 86 K = F 123 I–IV Bernabe = Hermias, *In Platonis Phaedrum* 247c), Eros (*OF* 74 K = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.433.31-434.5 Diehl),[112] Zeus, and Bromios (*OF* 170 K = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.336.9 Diehl).[113] Damascius gives a summary of the theogony of the *Rhapsodie*s only up to this point, but we have numerous references to the poem provided by the Neoplatonists, and they enable us to reconstruct the rest of the narrative.

In the subsequent generation, the goddess Night frequently appears in the *Orphic Rhapsodies*: she is called the 'immortal nurse of the gods (Θεῶν τροφὸς ἀμβροσίη,' *OF* 106 K = F 112 Bernabe),[114] as the nourishment of the intelligible order of the gods; she is the wife and daughter of Phanes; Proclus explains in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* (1.450.22-25 Diehl) that Phanes springs forth alone and that he is celebrated in a song as both 'female and father' (θῆλυς καὶ γενέτωρ, *OF* 81 K = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.429.30 Diehl). Phanes creates the Nights, and has intercourse with the middle one (*OF* 98 K = F 148 Bernabe) – that is to say, possessing both genders, Phanes' female aspect creates the Nights and his male has intercourse with one of them.[115] The royal succession of the gods begins from Phanes and extends all the way to Dionysos (*OF* 101 K = Procl., *In Crat.* 105.10-25).[116] Phanes willingly gives the sceptre to Night and then Ouranos receives it from Night. This is contrary to Porphyry's statement in *De Antro* 16 that Kronos receives the sceptre from Ouranos and gives it to Zeus after castration – a version which is in line with Hesiod's *Theogony*. The goddess Night engenders Ouranos and Gaia (*OF* 109 K = Hermias, *In Platonis Phaedrum* 247d)[117] so that Ouranos becomes the third king. The marriage of Ouranos and Gaia results in the birth of numerous gods, including Kronos and Rhea, the subsequent royal

110 Damascius also describes the egg as the product of Aither and Chaos in *De Principiis* 123.1, see Rappe (2010), 498 n. 84.

111 F 129 I, F 134 I–II, F 134 IV, and F 136 II Bernabe.

112 F 124 and F 141 V Bernabe.

113 F 141 I–II and F 243 XV Bernabe.

114 Procl., *In Crat*. 168.2-6; the *Chaldean Oracles* F 17 des Places.

115 Brisson (2004), 95–6; Runia (2008), 343 n. 757.

116 F 98 IV, F 167 VI, F 168 I, F 174 III, F 193 I, F 226, and F 299 X Bernabe.

117 F 123 I, F 149 I–IV, F 149 VII, and F 177 V Bernabe.

couple.[118] Kronos castrates Ouranos and becomes the fourth king (*OF* 154 K = *De Antro* 16.20).

With the arrival of Zeus, the Orphic theogony diverges from that of Hesiod and becomes a cosmogony, as Brisson has demonstrated.[119] Zeus, the son of Kronos and Rhea, who is nurtured by the goddess Night, takes the royal power from Kronos by castrating him (*OF* 137 K = Procl., *In Crat.* 105.30-32 and *OF* 154 K = *De Antro* 16.8.-17.1).[120] Zeus swallows up Phanes (Protogonos), who possesses the primordial principle through Night, so that he reforms the gods and gives a new form to the universe (OF 167 K = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.324.14 Diehl).[121]

Porphyry's narrative in *De Antro* 16.8.-17.1 embraces the part of the *Rhapsodies* that tells of Ouranos' abdication of royal power through his castration by Kronos in the same way as he himself is later castrated by Zeus. It ends with a reference to the divine succession of Ouranos, Kronos, and, finally, Zeus, who also receives all the powers of Ouranos and Kronos. At this juncture, it is necessary to examine how Porphyry analyses these three traditional gods, particularly Kronos and Zeus, in order to establish their status in the hierarchical model of the Neoplatonists.[122] Quoting from an Orphic hymn (*OF* 168 K = F 354.42-44 Smith),[123] in his *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* Porphyry states that Zeus is assumed to be the mind of the cosmos, the one who created everything that the cosmos contains (F 354.5-41 Smith = Eus., *PE* 3.9.2-3). Porphyry gives and iconographic description of the god and underlines that Zeus is the demiurgic intellect (F 354.49-51 and F 354.58 Smith).

Plotinus likewise identifies Kronos as the Intellectual Principle in his treatise of *On Love* (*Enn.* 3.5.2.19), when he discusses the birth of Eros in the *Symposium* (*Symp*. 203b-d) and the metaphysical identities of Aphrodite, heavenly and earthly, and of Ouranos and Zeus.[124] Accordingly, Ouranos is the One, as he is the father of Kronos (*Enn.* 3.5.2.33-34); Aphrodite is Soul, as she is generated from Ouranos, and she is therefore called Heavenly Aphrodite (*Enn.* 3.5.2.14-16), whereas the other Aphrodite, the daughter of Zeus and Dione, is the ruler of Earthly marriages (*Enn.* 3.5.2.16-17). Plotinus deems Zeus to be the great Soul

118 Betegh (2006), 142 n. 43.
119 Brisson (2004), 96.
120 *OF* 137 K = F 193 II and F 225 I Bernabe.
121 F 241 I–II and F 241 IV–VI Bernabe.
122 See Chase (2004a), 84–7 on Porphyry's identification of Zeus.
123 F 243 I–VIII, F 243 XIV, F 243 XVI, F 243 XIX–XXII, F 243 XXIV–XXVIII, and F 243 XXXV–XXXVIII Bernabe.
124 See Smith (2007a), 233–42 for a full discussion.

and Intellect, referring to *Philebus* 30d1-2,[125] which shows the close affinity between Intellect and Soul, since Aphrodite is from Intellect and with Intellect (*Enn.* 3.5.8.14-15).[126] He also supports this view that Aphrodite is the soul of Zeus, because every intellectual principle represented by male gods associates with its souls represented by female gods (ὡς νῷ ἑκάστῳ ψυχῆς συνούσης, *Enn.* 3.5.8.19-21).

If we attempted to equate the Neoplatonic Hypostases, the One, Intellect and Soul, or the Chaldean triad, Father, *Dunamis* and the Demiurgic Intellect to Ouranos, Gaia, Kronos, and Zeus in *De Antro* 16.8-17.1, there will be a contradiction between this equation and the Neoplatonic view that the gods are transcendent and impassible (ἀπάθεια, F 377.86 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.53.84; Plot., *Enn.* 3.5.6.13).[127] The contradiction is evident in Porphyry's description of Kronos as enjoying human activities, although the god is basically accepted as belonging to the intelligible realm, but he himself is subjected to *genesis* according to *De Antro* 16.8-17.1. A passage from Porphyry's own *On the Styx* could be the answer to this conundrum. There, Porphyry says that the cosmic gods are not completely unaffected (οὐ πάντῃ ἀπαθεῖς). Although Homer calls them gods because of an old custom, there is in fact a great *daimon*, which is called Zeus by him, ruling over those who reach the sky (F 377.84-101 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.53.81-97):[128]

> Τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὕτως αὐτῷ διατέτακται· ὑποθέμενος δὲ τοὺς κοσμικοὺς θεούς, ὧν τὰ γένη διηριθμήκαμεν, οὐ πάντῃ ἀπαθεῖς, ≤θεοὺς≥ καλέσας κατὰ παλαιὰν συνήθειαν [ὧν τὰ γένη ἐξεθήκαμεν], κατ' αὐτὸν μεγάλου δαίμονος ὄντος, ὃν καλεῖ Δία καὶ οἷον ἄρχοντος τῶν ἄχρις οὐρανοῦ φθανόντων. Ὑποθέμενος οὖν τούτους, καθάπερ καὶ λέγονται, ἐμπαθεῖς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐπιθυμίας μετέχοντας καὶ ὀργῆς καὶ μίσους καὶ ἔχθρας καὶ ὑφ' εἱμαρμένην ὄντας, εἰκότως καὶ ἁμαρτάνειν οἴεται καὶ ψεύδεσθαι καὶ ὀμνύναι καὶ εὐορκεῖν ἢ τούναντίον τινὰς πλημμελεῖν εἰς τοὺς ὅρκους. Διὸ καὶ τούτων κολάσεις ὑποτίθεται, οὐ μέντοι ἀναμεμιγμένας τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις κολαστηρίοις, ἀλλ' ἅτε μείζονας ὄντας, μείζονος καὶ τιμωρίας πειρᾶσθαι ἀδικήσαντας. Διὸ

125 See Plot., *Enn.* 4.4.9.1-3 for the other reference to *Phil.* 30d; also *Enn.* 4.4.10.1-4: 'the ordering principle is twofold, there is the principle known to us as the Demiurge and there is the Soul of the All; we apply the appellation Zeus sometimes to the Demiurge and sometimes to the principle conducting the universe,' trans. MacKenna (1991), 294.

126 Smith (2007a), 238–9.

127 See Plot., *Enn.* 3.5.6.4-24 for a detailed discussion; *Sententia* 30 for Porphyry's designation of the One as God, and Dillon (2010), 33.

128 Trans. Johnson (2013), 355.

> τῶν μὲν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν ἐν Ἅιδου τὰ κολαστήρια· τῶν δ' εἰρημένων θεῶν ὑπὸ τὸν Ἅιδην ἐν τῇ Κρόνου ἐπικρατείᾳ κατὰ τὸν Τάρταρον.
>
> In this way, he made the rankings for humans; but he supposed that the cosmic gods, whose races we have enumerated, were not entirely impassible, calling them <gods> according to the ancient practice {whose races we have set forth}, since there is, according to him, a great daemon, whom he calls Zeus, and rules those who come first as far as heaven. He supposed, therefore, that they are passible, just as they are said [to be], and for this reason they participate in desire, anger, hatred, enmity, and are under Fate; reasonably he also supposes that they sin, lie, swear oaths, keep oaths, or on the contrary some break their oaths. For this reason also he lays down their punishments, though of course not mixing them up with human punishments; but since those who did wrong were greater they also experienced a greater punishment. For this reason the prisons of human souls are in Hades, while the prisons of those called gods are under Hades in the realm of Kronos down in Tartarus.

This passage assures us that Porphyry considers Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus to be *daimones*, and that they belong to the sublunary region, which is below the visible celestial bodies, including the cosmos, the fixed stars and the seven planets.[129] The idea of a lower Zeus, reigning over the sublunary region, finds its origin in Plutarch's testimony of Xenocrates (F 18 Heinze = *Plat. Quaest.* 1007f), who separated two 'Zeuses,' with the upper Zeus reigning over the intelligible realm.[130]

As for 'Kronos with his sphere is the first of those who are set against Ouranos' in *De Antro* 16.20-22, this phrase raises the intriguing question of how Porphyry intended this to be understood.[131] The use of τῶν ἀντιφερομένων τῷ Οὐρανῷ is an allusion to Aristotle's *De Caelo* 291b2 (ἕκαστον γὰρ ἀντιφέρεται τῷ οὐρανῷ κατὰ τὸν αὑτοῦ κύκλον), in which he discusses the various speeds of the planets according to their distance to heaven. The movement of the planets is hindered by their proximities to heaven: the outermost revolution of heaven is the fastest of all, whereas the movements of the planets are the reverse of that of the outer heaven. That means that the nearest to heaven, namely Saturn

129 See also Chapter 3, '*Daimones* and Souls on the Descent into *Genesis*.'

130 Dillon (1996b), 27; see also Schibli (1993), 146–7.

131 See also *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* (F 359.85-87 Smith = Eus., *PE* 3.11.36) for the image of Kronos: 'They saw the power of Kronos slow-moving and tardy and cold; they therefore ascribed the power of time to him, and they represent him standing and grey-headed in reference to time which is growing old.'

(Kronos), is the most affected, and so moves the slowest; thus, the Moon, the farthest from heaven, is the least affected and moves the fastest. In his commentary on *Timaeus* 36d2-7 (*In Tim.* 2.263.19-264.33 Diehl), Proclus also discusses why the speeds of the circuits of the planets change, saying that some (astronomers) divided 'space into seven circles which move in opposite directions to one another' (τῇ ἀπλανεῖ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν κύκλοις ἀντιφερόμενοι κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν κίνησιν, *In Tim.* 2.264.2-3 Diehl). Having explained the different views of astronomers, Proclus agrees with those who claim that the seven circles of the planets and of the fixed stars move in opposite directions because of their 'reverse revolution' (ἐναντίος, *In Tim.* 2.264.15-19 Diehl). The opposite direction of the heavenly bodies also occurs in Plato's *Statesman*, in which the age of Kronos belongs to the time when the revolutions of the heavenly bodies turned in the 'opposite direction' (ἐναντία, *Polit.* 270d5). This change resulted in rejuvenation of the old and at a time when people effortlessly obtained what they needed in abundance.

Porphyry's description of Kronos as inebriated by honey or pleasure (*De Antro* 16.9-14) should be considered from a perspective of microcosmic interpretation on the assumption that Kronos symbolises the individual souls under the process of embodiment. The usage of the verb σκοτοῦν in *De Antro* 16.9 is an echo of σκότωσις in *Sententia* 29.30 which is the outcome of the soul falling into bodies. Zeus is the cause or force which leads the individual souls down to the material world.

In his *Miscellaneous Researches* (F 261.32-52 Smith = Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* 3.41.10-42.1), Porphyry explains that the soul is in intellect when its rational part predominates. He declines the spatial blend of the soul and body and says that the soul is in a non-spatial relation to the body.[132] He emphasises that the body's entrapment of the soul actually signifies its non-spatial relation to the body, that is to say, it results from the relation, downward movement and propensity of the soul towards any object:[133]

> μὴ κωλυόμενα γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν σωμάτων τὰ νοητά, ἀλλὰ διὰ παντὸς σώματος χωροῦντα καὶ διαφοιτῶντα καὶ διεξιόντα, οὐχ οἷά τέ ἐστιν ὑπὸ τόπου σωματικοῦ κατέχεσθαι· νοητὰ γὰρ ὄντα ἐν νοητοῖς καὶ τόποις ἐστίν, ἢ γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἢ ἐν τοῖς ὑπερκειμένοις νοητοῖς, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ ποτὲ μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἐστιν, ὅταν λογίζηται, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν τῷ νῷ, ὅταν νοῇ. ἐπὰν οὖν ἐν σώματι λέγηται εἶναι, οὐχ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ τῷ σώματι λέγεται εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐν σχέσει καὶ τῷ παρεῖναι, ὡς λέγεται ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. καὶ γὰρ τῇ σχέσει καὶ τῇ πρός τι ῥοπῇ καὶ διαθέσει δεδέσθαι φαμὲν ὑπὸ

132 Sorabji (2005), 204–5.

133 Trans. Dillon (2004), 198–9.

> τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχήν, ὡς λέγομεν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐρωμένης δεδέσθαι τὸν ἐραστήν, οὐ σωματικῶς οὐδὲ τοπικῶς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ σχέσιν. ἀμέγεθες γὰρ ὂν καὶ ἄογκον καὶ ἀμερὲς τῆς κατὰ μέρος τοπικῆς περιγραφῆς κρεῖττόν ἐστιν. τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἔχον μέρος ποίῳ δύναται τόπῳ περιγράφεσθαι; ὄγκῳ γὰρ τόπος συνυφίσταται· τόπος γάρ ἐστι πέρας τοῦ περιέχοντος, καθ' ὃ περιέχει τὸ περιεχόμενον.
>
> For since intelligibles are not hindered by bodies but, rather control and penetrate and traverse them, they cannot be contained in a corporeal space, for being intelligible, they are in intelligible locations, either in themselves or in intelligibles superior to them; and the soul is sometimes in itself and sometimes in intellect, that is, whenever it is thinking. So, when it is said to be in the body, it is not said to be in the body as in a place but as being in relation to it and as being present to it, even as god is said to be in us; for, indeed, it is by reason of relationship and inclination and attitude towards an object that we say that the soul is ensnared by the body, even as we say that the lover is ensnared by the beloved, neither corporeally nor spatially, but by relationship; being something without size or bulk, it [soul] is superior to any spatial circumscription of part by part, for by what sort of spatial circumscription could something that does not possess parts be contained? Place, after all, is ontologically coordinate with bulk, for place is the limit of the containing element, in accordance with which the contained is contained.

By comparison, in *De Antro* 16.15 the verb, δεῖν, signifies 'the soul being in relation with the body,' as was explicitly expressed in this passage by Porphyry (δεδέσθαι, F 261.45-46 = Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* 3.41.17-18).[134] In contrast to the effect of the predominance of the rational part of the soul over the irrational part, the influence of the desiring part of the soul manifests itself by the tendency towards the fulfilment of bodily needs, either in the form of having excessive food or desiring intercourse. Porphyry's remark shows that the 'pleasure' (ἡδονή) of having the taste of honey, as in the case of Kronos, results in the same way as sexual desire (ἐπιθυμία), as in the case of Ouranos it causes the descent of the soul into the material world. One of the passages in *De Abstinentia* (1.46.1-15) is quite significant not only because Porphyry emphasises

134 Simonini (2010), 164–5 states that the description of the desire for sexual intercourse is dear to Porphyry who uses it several times in *De Abstinentia* (1.30.6, 1.31.1, 1.33.2, 1.34.4, and 4.13.8) and *Ad Marcellam* 33.4 (δεῖν), and that the desire of sexual pleasures causes the union of the soul that in the context of *De Antro* refers to that of the Naiad Nymphs' weaving of flesh.

that reason (λόγος) is in no need of excessive food, but also because the soul feels the ill effects of overnutrition on the body. Porphyry's description of the states of Kronos and Poros in *De Antro* 16.8-10, who are filled up with honey and nectar, and the passage in *De Abstinentia* 1.46.1-15, share similarities in such a way that any propensity for extremes, particularly excessive consumption, makes the soul lazy and sleepy:[135]

> Οὐκ ἀπεικότως ἄρα τὸ πολὺ καὶ περιττὸν ὁ λόγος ἀποκρίνας εἰς ὀλίγον περιγράφει τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, εἰ μέλλει μήτε πορίζων ἔξειν πράγματα διὰ τὸ δεῖσθαι πλειόνων, μήτε εὐτρεπῆ ποιῶν πλειόνων τῶν ὑπηρετησομένων δεήσεσθαι, μήτε ἐσθίων πλειόνων ἡδονῶν ἀντιλήψεσθαι, μήτε πληρούμενος πολλῆς ἀργίας ἐμπλήσεσθαι, μήτε παχυτέρου φορτίου ἐμπιπλάμενος ὑπνώδης γίγνεσθαι, μήτε τῶν πιαινόντων τὸ σῶμα πληρούμενος ἰσχυρότερον μὲν τὸν δεσμόν, αὐτὸν δὲ ἀργότερον πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ποιήσειν καὶ ἀσθενέστερον.
>
> Reason, then, will quite properly reject abundant or excessive food, and will restrict what is necessary to a small amount, if the intention is neither, when making provision to have problems because more is needed; nor, when preparing the meal, to need more servants; nor, when eating it, to reach out for more pleasures; nor, when getting full, to be filled with inertia; nor, when filled up with this heavy load, to become sleepy; nor, when full of the foods which fatten the body, to make one's chains stronger and oneself more inert and feebler about one's own concerns.

Food overindulgence in *De Antro* 16.16 also leads to bodily pleasure and strengthens the bonds or chains of the soul with the material world through the fattening of the body. The satisfaction of bodily needs results in impairment of the rational part of the soul. In order to explain why reason does not operate properly, Porphyry uses the metaphor of tares as a symbol of the activities of all the capacities of the soul through perception and the body, and of wheat-seed as a symbol of the activities of reason (*De Abstinentia* 1.30-31).[136] When the soul does not remain in the intelligible realm because of its wickedness, there is no room for the activities of reason. Wickedness of the soul does not damage its own essence by engendering unreason and its irrational part deals only with the material world.[137] However, this feature of the soul is

135 Trans. Clark (2000), 49.

136 See Clark (2000), 134–5 n. 108; Plot., *Enn.* 1.8.14

137 *Sententiae* 37.29-30: 'body does not cut off its union, when it unites with soul, although it is a hindrance to its energies in many ways.'

connected with mortality by means of unreason and is dragged down from its own to what is foreign.

The usage of the verb δεσμεῖν in *De Antro* 16.16 is an echo of the depiction of the prisoners dwelling in the subterranean cave in the *Republic*, who since childhood have fetters on their necks and legs (*Rep*. 514a-b and 515c). The prisoners' fetters cause restrictions on their activities so that the prisoners see truth as representing the reflections and shadows of the artificial objects, as in the case of *De Abstinentia* 1.30-31, in which the irrational part of the soul leaves no room for the activities of its rational part. Thus, it is apparent that Porphyry considers that the descent of Kronos into *genesis* in *De Antro* 16.15-16 or the union of the soul with the body signifies the soul bound with the fetters of the material world, and because of the soul's propensity to passions and pleasure, this union leads to the soul's suffering from loss of intellect.

The explanation of the statement that 'the divinities shed their powers, ἀποσπερματίζειν, like semen, after they have been dissolved in pleasure' in *De Antro* 16.16-17 also occurs in *Sententia* 37.36-49, which includes the Neoplatonic exegesis of Poros and Penia, whose son is Eros in *Symposium* 203b-c:[138]

> Ὥσπερ δὲ κρατηθὲν ἐν ὕλῃ τι σπέρμα καθ' ἕκαστον ὧν ἐδύνατο λόγων ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι τῇ ὕλῃ κρατεῖται καὶ πάλιν συναχθὲν εἰς τὴν τοῦ σπέρματος δύναμιν καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν μερῶν ἔχει τὴν πᾶσαν δύναμιν, οὕτω καὶ ψυχῆς ἀύλου τὸ ὡς μέρος ἐπινοούμενον τῆς πάσης ψυχῆς ἔχει τὴν δύναμιν. τὸ δὲ πρὸς ὕλην ῥέψαν κεκράτηται μὲν καθ' ὃ εἶδος ῥέψαν ἐπιτηδείως ἔσχε προσομιλεῖν ἐνύλῳ, ἔχει δὲ τὴν τῆς ὅλης δύναμιν ἤδη καὶ ἐντυγχάνει οὔσῃ ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ὅταν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνύλου ἀποστὰν ἐν ἑαυτῷ γένηται. ἐπεὶ δὲ πρὸς μὲν ὕλην ῥεπούσῃ ἀπορία πάντων καὶ τῆς οἰκείας δυνάμεως κένωσις, εἰς δὲ τὸν νοῦν ἀναγομένη τὸ πλῆρες αὐτῆς κατὰ ≤τὸ≥ τὴν δύναμιν ἔχειν τῆς πάσης εὑρίσκετο, τὴν μὲν εἰκότως Πενίαν, τὴν δὲ Πόρον οἱ τοῦτο πρῶτον γνόντες τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ πάθος ᾐνίξαντο.
>
> And even as a seed, when possessed by matter, is dominated in all the parts of the matter in accordance with each of the reason-principles of which it contains the potentiality, and again, when, drawn together into the power of the seed, it has its whole power in each of its parts, even so that which is thought of as a part of an immaterial soul possesses the power of the whole soul. That aspect which is inclined towards matter is dominated by it insofar as, in its capacity as a form which has inclined, it

138 Trans. Dillon (2005), 822–23. Plutarch in *De Iside* 374c-d considers Poros to be intelligible reality, Penia to be matter and Eros to be the universe. See Plot., *Enn*. 3.5.5 and 3.5.9. for the dual aspect of Eros and Penia as matter.

> has adapted itself to consort with what is material, but it contains nonetheless the power of the whole, and encounters it as existent within itself. And since, in its declination towards matter, it experiences deprivation of everything and nullification of its proper power, whereas when it is elevated towards intellect it discovers its fullness in virtue of possessing the power of totality, those who first recognised the experience which the soul undergoes, expressing themselves riddlingly, reasonably called the one aspect of it Poverty (Poros), and the other Resource (Penia).

From this passage we may infer that the divinities' shedding of powers signifies that the inclination towards Matter leads the soul to be in need of everything and to empty its intellectual power. Thus, Penia and Poros show the two opposite conditions of the soul. The former is a status of the soul which loses its own power, whereas the latter is in a condition for the purification of all the weaknesses of the material world. Its own power is filled with the Soul.

Elsewhere in *De Abstinentia* (2.37.21-33), Porphyry states that our inferior nature is the reason for our incapability of preserving the divine pure and unharmed. Poros or Resource indicates the condition of the soul which ascends towards Intellect and becomes filled with its own power, but then falls away because of *genesis* and our nature suffering from deprivation:[139]

> εἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλ' ἐντεῦθέν γε τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἐλάττωμα, ἐντεῦθεν τὸ θρηνούμενον πρὸς τῶν παλαιῶν, ὡς τοίων ἔκ τ' ἐρίδων ἔκ τε νεικέων γενόμεσθα, ὅτι τὸ θεῖον ἀκήρατον καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀβλαβὲς σῴζειν οὐ δυνάμεθα· οὐ γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἦμεν ἀπροσδεεῖς· αἰτία δὲ ἡ γένεσις καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ πενίᾳ ἡμᾶς γενέσθαι, τοῦ πόρου ἀπορρυέντος. ἡ δὲ πενία ἐξ ἀλλοτρίων τὴν σωτηρίαν καὶ τὸν κόσμον, δι' οὗ τὸ εἶναι ἐλάμβανεν, ἐκτᾶτο. ὅστις οὖν πλειόνων δεῖται τῶν ἔξωθεν, ἐπὶ πλέον τῇ πενίᾳ προσήλωται· καὶ ὅσῳ πλεόνων ἐνδεής, τοσούτῳ θεοῦ μὲν ἄμοιρος, πενίᾳ δὲ σύνοικος.

> But if it is not possible, and the defect of our nature is there, there is what the ancients lamented:
>
> from strife like this, and quarrels, we are born[140]
>
> namely that we cannot keep the divine untouched and harmless in relation to everything. The cause is generation and our being born in poverty, resource having trickled away. Poverty got its preservation, and the world

139 Trans. Clark (2000), 99 with n. 533.

140 Empedocles, 31 B 124 DK and F 118 Inwood; Clark (2000), 178 n. 532.

> from which it acquired existence, from things that are not its own. So whoever needs more from outside is riveted the more firmly to poverty, and the more he needs more, the more he has no share in the god but is wedded to poverty.

Clearly, Kronos, like Poros, is the soul under the influence of irrationality as a result of the intoxicating effect of honey (or nectar as in the case of Poros in the *Symposium*), which is a hostile and alien source to the rational part of the soul. Predominance of irrationality is indicative of the soul suffering from poverty or deprivation, which Plotinus identifies with Matter being destitute, in *Ennead* 3.5.9.45-57, and, therefore, the soul falls into the material world

CHAPTER 4

The Path towards the Immortality of the Soul

This chapter aims to analyse the relevant passages in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, which include Porphyry's interpretation of the last four verses of Homer's cave of the nymphs as the journey of the soul. These verses state that the cave has two entrances: one oriented towards the South for the immortals, the other towards the North for the mortals (*Od.* 13.109-112):

> δύω δέ τέ οἱ θύραι εἰσίν,
> αἱ μὲν πρὸς βορέαο καταιβαταὶ ἀνθρώποισιν,
> αἱ δ' αὖ πρὸς νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι· οὐδέ τι κείνῃ
> ἄνδρες ἐσέρχονται, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὁδός ἐστιν.
>
> It has two entrances:
> one is northerly for humans to descend,
> the other, southerly, is more divine; through that entrance
> men do not enter, but it is the way of immortals.

Porphyry classifies of the journey of the soul, or rather, of two journeys, one through the intelligible realm and the other through the sensible realm; the latter journey is, in turn, divided into two, one through the fixed stars and the other through the seven planets. According to this classification, the chapter firstly discusses the journeys of the soul through the sensible world in order to demonstrate how Porphyry interprets the subject within the scope of the gates of heaven, relating to the two entrances of Homer's cave. Next, it deals with the journey of the soul through the intelligible realm and seek to show that on the whole, *De Antro* testify to the fact that the philosophical way of life leads the soul to attain immortality.

1 The Journey of the Soul through the Sensible World

In *De Antro* 29.5-7, Porphyry interprets the double gates of the Homeric cave as the heavenly openings for the journeys of the soul through the sensible world, either through the fixed stars or through the seven planets. This theory is based on the fact that the seven planets are the path of the soul for the descent into *genesis*. Of the four major phases of the pneumatic part of the soul during the

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process of its descent into *genesis*, the phase of the aethereal body is generated from the substances of the first five planets, and the phases of the solar and lunar bodies from the substances of the Sun and the Moon, as we have previously seen.[1] However, its ascent must occur through the fixed stars, although Porphyry does not specify this. As an opposite process to the descent of the soul, the pneumatic vehicle and the irrational part of the soul lose their composition and are resolved into their elements.[2]

Porphyry presents different exegeses of the double gates of the cave of the nymphs, variously named, such as the gates of Cancer and Capricorn, the gates of the Sun, and the gates of the Sun and the Moon. He refers to Numenius and, consequently, to the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*; in fact, the quotation from Numenius is mainly an exegesis of the myth of Er. In a broader sense, Porphyry follows his master Plato, since he may have the same ethical purpose in the myth of Er as he does in *De Antro*, that is, to show how significant it is for the fate of the soul to lead a philosophical life.

The parts which cover the discussion of the solstitial gates are centred upon the discussion of the celestial map of the cosmos in the Mithraic mysteries by Mithraic scholars, particularly Beck, since it is commonly agreed that the model of the universe based on the solstitial gates has strong Mithraic influences.[3] The tauroctony in the mysteries of Mithras depicts an act of salvation, a journey which combines the Mithraic grade orders with the planetary orders as Beck states that 'a microcosmic enactment of a macrocosmic journey through space and time' which allows the initiates to liberate themselves from the material world.[4] Porphyry is not the only Neoplatonist quoting passages

1 See Chapter 3, 'The Pneumatic Body.'

2 See Chapter 4, 'The Journey through the Intelligible Realm' for a detailed discussion.

3 For the solstitial gates, Mithras' macrocosmic seat, Cautes and Cautopates, see Beck (2006); Beck (2004/2000a), 67–75/157–65, 78–80/168–70, and 90–2/178–80: Chapter 4: *Ritual, Myth, Doctrine, and Initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New Evidence from a Cult Vessel*; Beck (2004/1976a), 129–32/95–8: Chapter 7: *The Seat of Mithras at the Equinoxes: Porphyry, De Antro Nympharum 24*; Beck (2004/1977), 133–49/1–17: Chapter 8: *Cautes and Cautopates: Some Astronomical Considerations*; Beck (2004/1977–78), 185–8/101–4: Chapter 10: *Interpreting the Ponza Zodiac II*; Beck (2004/1994), 267–8/29–30 and 280–1/39–40: Chapter 13: *In the Place of the Lion: Mithras in the Tauroctony*; Beck (2004), 325–6 Chapter 15: *Whose Astrology? The Imprint of Ti. Claudius Balbillus on the Mithraic Mysteries*; Beck (2004/1994), Chapter 16: *Cosmic Models: Some Uses of Hellenistic Science in Roman Religion*; Beck (2004/1998), Chapter 17: *Qui Mortalitatis Causa Convenerunt: The Meeting of Virunum Mithraists*. See also Greenbaum (2016), 182–3.

4 Beck (1988), 11 (for full discussion ibid. Chapter 2: The grade order and exoteric planetary orders: mastery of space and time).

from Numenius on the solstitial gates, as Proclus also draws on Numenius' exegesis for his commentary on the *Republic*,[5] as briefly discussed below.

In *De Antro* 22.7-8 and 29.11-14, Porphyry refers directly to the myth of Er and associates the two entrances (δύο στόμια) in *Republic* 615d5 and 615e2 with the gates of the Sun and the Moon. The section including the gates of the Sun and the Moon in the treatise has, up to now, received less attention from scholars than the one related to the solstitial gates. The analysis in this section proceeds to show how the Sun and the Moon are associated with the routes of the soul's ascent and descent in Porphyry's thought. Here, Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus* (F 79 Sodano)[6] is significant in that, at the celestial level, he considers the Sun and the Moon to be the latter two principles of the triad Being-Intellect-Life in Porphyry. Indeed, the association of the Sun with Intellect is not unfamiliar in the Platonic tradition. For example, we find instances of association of Intellect with the Sun in Plutarch's *De Genio* 591b and *De Facie* 945b-c. The analysis of Porphyry's identification of the Sun and the Moon with Intellect and Life aims to offer some insights towards an alternative reading of *De Antro*.

1.1 *The Solstitial Gates: Numenius Fragments 31 and 32*

In a lengthy passage, Porphyry begins his detailed discussion of different significations of the Homeric cave's two gates by referring to a lost work of Numenius (*De Antro* 21-24.4 = F 31 des Places = Test. F 43 Leemans). He considers Numenius and Cronius as the originators of the theory of the solstitial gates, as they propose that the Homeric cave of the nymphs is the image of the cosmos (τοῦ δὴ ἄντρου εἰκόνα καὶ σύμβολον φησὶ τοῦ κόσμου φέροντος Νουμήνιος καὶ ὁ τούτου ἑταῖρος Κρόνιος δύο εἶναι ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄκρα, ὧν οὔτε νοτιώτερόν ἐστι τοῦ χειμερινοῦ τροπικοῦ οὔτε βορειότερον τοῦ θερινοῦ. ἔστι δ' ὁ μὲν θερινὸς κατὰ καρκίνον, ὁ δὲ χειμερινὸς κατ' αἰγόκερων, *De Antro* 21.3-7).

Porphyry predicates the theory of the journey of the soul on a principle of nature which inherently includes opposites and polarities (*De Antro* 29.4-10). As regards celestial oppositions, the winter and summer solstices indicate the two 'extremities in heaven' (ἄκρα ἐν οὐρανῷ), opposite cosmological dyads, where the former occurs in Capricorn in the South and the latter in Cancer in the North. Another polarity is found in the placement of the two torchbearers in the mysteries of Mithras: Cautes is assigned to the South due to the

5 See also Beck (1988), 42 n. 91 for the sources of Porphyry, Macrobius and Proclus as Numenius; Stahl (1990), 24–32 for Macrobius' sources on interpretation of this subject in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*.

6 Johnson (2013), 68.

heat, Cautopates to the North due to the coldness of the north wind (*De Antro* 24.10-25.1).[7] As regards the proper seat of Mithras as the master of *genesis* (and *apogenesis*), it is located in the region of the celestial equator.[8] Because cold is related to *genesis* and heat to *apogenesis*, Cautopates is related to descent into mortality through the gate of Cancer, Cautes to ascent to the immortality through the gate of Capricorn.

The assignments of the two extreme points, Cancer and Capricorn to the Moon and Saturn, are based on the idea of their distances from the Earth in the geocentric model of the Solar system, so that the Moon as the house and ruler of Cancer is the closest to the Earth in the northern hemisphere, whereas Saturn, as the house and ruler of Capricorn, is the remotest planet from the Earth in the northern hemisphere. This idea is also appropriate for the balance of 'apogenetic against genetic powers.'[9] Cancer is the gate of descent because its ruler, the Moon, is the genetic power, whereas Capricorn is the gate of ascent because its ruler, Saturn, is the apogenetic power.[10] The soul descends into the material world through the chain of the seven planets towards the Earth through the Moon, and returns to its source through Saturn to the fixed stars.

Another reference to Numenius is found in *De Antro* 28.1-10 (F 32 des Places = Test. 44 Leemans), in which Numenius interprets the gates of the Sun of Homer in *Odyssey* 24.12 as being the same as the gates of Cancer and Capricorn. Porphyry also refers to Pythagoras, identifying Homer's people of dreams with souls and suggesting that the Milky Way is the place where souls are brought together.[11] Nevertheless, Porphyry's direct assignment of the doctrine to Pythagoras is through Numenius:

> (28.1-10) λέγει δέ που καὶ Ἡλίου πύλας, σημαίνων καρκίνον τε καὶ αἰγόκερων· ἄχρι <γὰρ> τούτων πρόεισιν ἀπὸ βορέου ἀνέμου εἰς τὰ νότια κατιὼν κἀκεῖθεν ἐπανιὼν εἰς τὰ βόρεια. αἰγόκερως δὲ καὶ καρκίνος περὶ τὸν γαλαξίαν τὰ πέρατα αὐτοῦ εἰληχότες, καρκίνος μὲν τὰ βόρεια, αἰγόκερως δὲ τὰ νότια· δῆμος δὲ ὀνείρων κατὰ Πυθαγόραν αἱ ψυχαί, ἃς συνάγεσθαι φησὶν εἰς τὸν γαλαξίαν τὸν οὕτω προσαγορευόμενον ἀπὸ τῶν γάλακτι τρεφομένων, ὅταν εἰς γένεσιν

7 Clauss (2000), 95–8; Beck (2004/1977), 133–49/1–17; Beck (2006), 107, 112, 206–8, and 211-14.

8 Beck (1988), 93–4; Beck (2004/1976a), 129–32/95–8.

9 Beck (1988), 96.

10 In *De Antro* 23.7–14, Porphyry explains the role of Capricorn and Saturn in the process of *apogenesis* in the mysteries by giving the example of the Romans' celebration of Saturnalia when the Sun is in Capricorn. See also Beck (2004/1998), 359–60/339–40.

11 Burkert (1972), 367 n. 94; Fortenbaugh (2009), 106–8.

> πέσωσιν. ᾧ καὶ σπένδειν αὐταῖς τοὺς ψυχαγωγοὺς μέλι κεκραμένον γάλακτι ὡς ἂν δι' ἡδονῆς εἰς γένεσιν μεμελετηκυίαις ἔρχεσθαι· αἷς συγκυεῖσθαι τὸ γάλα πέφυκεν.
>
> (28.1-10) He (Numenius) also speaks somewhere of the gates of the Sun, signifying Cancer and Capricorn. For the Sun advances as far as these regions, descending from the northern quarter to the South, and rising from that place to the North. Capricorn and Cancer are near the Milky Way, falling to the boundaries of the Milky Way, Cancer to the North, Capricorn to the South. According to Pythagoras, the souls are the people of dreams, which are, he says, brought together into the Milky Way, and the Milky Way is named from those who are nourished with the milk whenever they would fall into *genesis*. So, those who lead souls to the underworld also pour libations of milk and honey to them, since they have been accustomed to enter into *genesis* because of pleasure; the milk is generated with birth.

It is well known that in his *Commentary on the Republic of Plato* (*In Remp.* 2.128.26-129.21 Kroll = F 35 des Places = Test. 42 Leemans), Proclus ascribed the theory of the solstitial gates only to Numenius. In his commentary, the gates of Capricorn and Cancer are the ascending and descending paths for the soul. Proclus' reference to Numenius and Porphyry's quotation from Numenius in *De Antro* 28.1-10 are compatible with each other because the gates of the Sun, according to Numenius, also signify the gates of Capricorn and Cancer. The correspondence of the solstices to the gates of the Sun seems to result from the fact that the Sun occurs in Capricorn during the winter solstice when/where the Sun reaches its nadir of being 'hot' and in Cancer during the summer solstice when/where the Sun reaches its zenith of being 'cold.'[12] The Sun proceeds towards the solstices, descending from the North, Capricorn, to the South, Cancer, and from there ascending to the North, Capricorn, during its apparent annual path of the Sun, which is described as the ecliptic. To put it another way, the Sun begins to descend from the summer solstice and to ascend from the winter solstice, as the soul begins its descent into *genesis* through the gate of the summer solstice in Cancer and complete its ascent into *apogenesis* through the gate of the winter solstice in Capricorn.

In accordance with Proclus' report in his commentary on the *Republic*, Numenius deemed not only the winter and summer solstices (τὰ τροπικὰ ζῴδια),

12 Beck (2006), 209–14 for a detailed discussion of the solstitial gates in relation to the ecliptic and the torchbearers.

and the 'two gates' of the Sun (αἱ δύο πύλαι), but also the 'two chasms' of Plato (τὰ χάσματα τὰ διπλᾶ, *Rep*. 614c2 and 614d4) to be the same thing, differing only in name.[13] Proclus provides more accurate information on the doctrine than Porphyry in *De Antro*. One of the possible reasons is that Numenius and Proclus dealt only with the exegesis of the myth of Er, whereas Porphyry's quotation on the Milky Way is, for example, only a part of his extended exegetical practice.[14] In addition, Proclus criticises Numenius' use of astrology (γενεθλιαλογικοῖς) and mystic rites in his interpretation of the myth of Er. Proclus' usage of the phrase 'the leaps of the souls from the solstices to the equinoxes and from these to the solstices' is particularly revealing, and Beck states that it is 'ritual action replicating in the *mithraeum* the descent and return of the souls.'[15]

As regards Porphyry's usage of the words for gates, entrances or doors throughout *De Antro,* we can divide them into three, θύρα, πύλη and στόμιον. In *De Antro* 22.8, 29.11, and 31.6, στόμιον occurs three times. I shall discuss this classification in the next section, particularly Porphyry's direct reference to *Republic* 615d5 and 615e2. In this passage, Plato uses στόμιον to signify the entrance to the underworld where wicked souls are punished more severely than their crimes. Among such criminals, for example, he mentions Ardiaeus the Great, a dictator in Pamphylia, who was presumed to have committed many atrocious crimes, such as killing his father and brother.

In *De Antro* 1.10, 20.6, 24.5, and 31.2, Porphyry uses θύρα often when referring to the gates of the cave of the nymphs, just as Homer in *Odyssey* 13.109. In *De Antro* 23.14, θύρα is used in reference to the gate which the Romans called 'ianus,' who in ancient Roman religion is the god symbolising beginnings and transitions, and the god of gates, entrances and doors. Porphyry also associates

13 See Petty (2012), 74–7 and 193–4 for the commentary on the fragment. Also Lamberton (1986), 70 for, according to Proclus' quotation, the lists of 'the elements of the Numenian interpretation of the Homeric passages in question – the description of the cave of the nymphs at *Od.* 13.110–12 and the second *nekyia* at the opening of *Od.* 24.'

14 In contrast to the Pythagoreans who see the Milky Way as the land of the souls in *De Antro*, in *On the Styx*, which is preserved in Stobaeus' *Anth.* (1.49.53.7–31 = F 377 Smith), Porphyry argues that there are three places for the souls; one is 'on the Earth' (ἐπίγειος) and another is in 'the Elysian plain' beside Oceanus (τό 'Ηλύσιον πεδίον), where souls are sent while alive, that is to say, where souls take their bodies along with them. The third place is in Hades, where souls are present after death in order to be liberated from their bodies.

15 Beck (2006), 130. The phrase is a scornful comment of Proclus, who uses another sarcastic expression (ὡς ἐκεῖνος λέγει προστραγῳδῶν) in his commentary on the *Tim.* (*In Tim*. 1.304.4 = F 21.6 des Places = Test. 24 Leemans) for Numenius' proposition of three gods, the First 'Father,' the Second 'Maker,' and the Third 'Product.' Porphyry, like Proclus, uses the same word as a noun, γενεθλιᾱλόγος, in order to show Plotinus' unfavourable view of astrology (*VPlot*. 15.21-26).

'ianus' with the 'beginning of the month of January' (ἰανουάριον μῆνα τὸν θυραῖον, *De Antro* 23.15). In *De Antro* 27, in which Θύρα is used six times, Porphyry mentions the tradition that the Pythagoreans and Egyptians did not even permit one to speak while passing through gates of temples or any other sacred gate. Referring to Homer and quoting from *Iliad*. 9.583, Porphyry states that the poet was already aware of the sacred gates. Apart from θύρα, in *De Antro* 3.5, 3.18, 10.2, and 20.5, Porphyry also uses δίθῠρος to signify the two entrances of the Homeric cave of the nymphs. Furthermore, in *De Antro* 29.4 and 31.1, he identifies natural formations with two entrances as the symbol of nature, which contains a harmony of tension in opposition, using the image of the drawn bow (διὰ τοῦτο παλίντονος ἡ ἁρμονία καὶ τοξεύει διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων).[16]

In *De Antro* 3.4, 23.3, 24.7, and 26.1, Porphyry then uses πύλη in reference to the gates of heaven for humans, and for immortals and gods.[17] In *De Antro* 27.10, Porphyry claims that Homer knows about the 'gates of heaven' (πύλαι οὐρανοῦ). The Homeric 'gates of the Sun' (Ἡλίου πύλαι) are found in *De Antro* 28.1, with the quotation from Numenius, and the same occurs in *De Antro* 29.12, in which Porphyry refers to the theologians assigning the gates of the Sun and the Moon to souls for ascending and descending. The gates of the Sun are also reminiscent of Diogenes Laertius' report of the fact that Pythagoras 'called the eyes the gates of the Sun' (D.L., 8.29.11, ἡλίου πύλας καλεῖ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς).

1.2 *The Gates of the Sun and the Moon*

> (29.11-14) δύο δὲ στόμια Πλάτων φησί, δι' οὗ μὲν ἀναβαινόντων εἰς οὐρανόν, δι' οὗ δὲ κατιόντων εἰς γῆν, καὶ τῶν θεολόγων πύλας ψυχῶν Ἥλιον τιθέντων καὶ Σελήνην, καὶ διὰ μὲν Ἡλίου ἀνιέναι, διὰ δὲ Σελήνης κατιέναι.
>
> (29.11-14) Plato says that there are two entrances, one through which the souls go up to heaven, the other through which they come down to Earth, while the theologians also make the Sun and the Moon the gates of souls, ascent through the Sun and descent through the Moon.

16 Heraclitus, 22 B 51 DK; this image also occurs in Plut., *De Iside* 369b1-2. See Beck (2004/2000), 59–64/ 149–54 and 77–81/167–71; Beck (2006), 82–5 for a detailed discussion of the adaption of the fragment of Heraclitus in mysteries of Mithras.

17 In *Phil. Orac*. an oracle (F 323 Smith = Eus., *PE* 9.10.1-2) mentions the steep and rough road for the blessed ones opening with bronze-bound gates (χαλκοδέτοις…πυλεῶσιν). Next, Porphyry changed it into the bronze-bound road (Χαλκόδετος…ὁδός) for the gods, which is steep and rough (F 324 Smith = Eus., *PE* 9.10.3-5). See also Johnson (2013), 106–7 and 338–9 on these fragments.

In this passage, Porphyry mentions one of the celestial oppositions, the gates of the Sun and the Moon. Indeed, he previously sums up the oppositions such as the journey of the soul through the sensible or the intelligible; an immortal or a mortal paths; a cardinal point above the Earth and another below it, one to the East and one to the West; regions to left and right; night and day (*De Antro* 29.4-10).[18]

Likewise, there are different classifications of the zodiacal signs such as feminine or masculine, nocturnal or diurnal, animal or human, fertile or sterile.[19] The distinction between solar or diurnal houses of the planets and lunar or nocturnal houses of the planets are closely related to the gates of the Sun and the Moon, which are the primary signs of the diurnal and nocturnal houses.[20] The former begin with Leo which is the house of the Sun and go through Virgo, the house of Mercury, Libra, house of Venus, Scorpius, the house of Mars, Sagittarius, the house of Jupiter to Capricorn, the house of Saturn (counterclockwise); the latter start with Cancer, the house of the Moon and go through Gemini, the house of Mercury, Taurus, the house of Venus, Aries, the house of Mars, Pisces, the house of Jupiter to Aquarius, the house of Saturn (clockwise). Accordingly, the orders of diurnal and nocturnal houses of the seven planets are in line with the planetary order in *De Antro* 22.2-6 except that Porphyry gives the nocturnal houses in reverse order (from Aquarius to Cancer).

The Sun's and the Moon's paths are essentially the same in the same direction:[21] the Sun's route is the ecliptic, as previously noted, while the Moon is inclined at approximately 5 degrees to the ecliptic. The Moon's crossing of the ecliptic from South to North symbolises an ascent and its crossing of the ecliptic from North to South symbolises a descent. The Moon's crossing points of the ecliptic, the ascending node (ὁ ἀναβιβάζων σύνδεσμος) and the descending node (ὁ καταβιβάζων σύνδεσμος), are also related to the lunar nodes depicted as the Mithraic torchbearers with raised and lowered torches in the tauroctony (*De Antro* 24.13-25.1). As Beck rightly observes, the Sun's rays has a function of apogenetic power, and its characteristics such as superior, high/up, heat/fiery,

18 See Beck (2006), Chapter 5.8 for a detailed discussion of '*De Antro* 29 based on a Mithraic list of star-talk oppositions' in regard to the location of the torchbearers in the tauroctony.

19 Barton (2003), 102 and 108.

20 Beck (2004/1976b), 156–7/6–7: in the Ponza Zodiac, as in the London and Siscia reliefs (*CIMRM* 810 and 1472) not with the same precision as in the Ponza, the solar house are on the same side of Sol and the lunar houses on the same side of Luna.

21 Beck (2006), 206–7 and 222–7.

male are compatible with the ascending path of the soul, whereas the Moon as the nearest to the Earth is inferior, down/low, cold/eartly, female.[22]

Porphyry's primary concern about the association of the gates of the Sun and the Moon with the two celestial openings of Plato in *Republic* 10 is ethical, rather than suggesting simply an astrological interpretation. The ascending path towards the Sun can be compared to the escape of the liberated prisoner from the Platonic cave, representing a choice towards a philosophical life instead of slavery to the material world. The path through the Sun symbolises the bright side of the soul under the guidance of its rational part, as is the case with the diurnal houses of the seven planets; similarly, the path through the Moon can be considered to be a symbol of the dark side of the soul under the guidance of its irrational part, as is the case with the nocturnal houses of the seven planets.

Let us now touch on briefly the possible identities of the theologians, making the Sun and the Moon the gates of souls (*De Antro* 29.12), though it would be quite difficult. The plural usage of the word θεολόγος can evidently be a reference to a particular group of people or members of different philosophical or religious/mystical groups. One of the theologians whom Porphyry has in his mind might be Parmenides due to his reference to Numenius saying that Parmenides also mentions these two gates in his *Physics*, the prologue of his poem (τῶν δύο πυλῶν τούτων μεμνῆσθαι καὶ Παρμενίδην ἐν τῷ Φυσικῷ φησι, *De Antro* 23.6-7 = 28 B 1 and B 11 DK).[23] Because of the fragmentary evidence, it is unclear whether the 'gates of the journeys of Night and Day' (πύλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός κελεύθων) are associated with the gates of the Sun and the Moon, but they signify light and darkness in the poem. We may, at most, propose that there is a link between the Parmenidean gates and the two celestial openings in Plato's myth of Er. Bearing in mind that the Parmenidean journey is one from a lie to the truth as revealed to him, albeit literally described as a journey from the underworld to heaven, we can compare Er with the philosopher in the sense that they are both messengers enlightening people as to what types of lives they should lead in order to be rewarded in this life and the afterlife.

It is now turn to explore Porphyry's interpretations of the Sun and the Moon and their roles in the ascent and descent of souls in his other works. In the

22 Beck (1988), 94–6 for a discussion of the apogenetic function of the solar ray in Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 12 (*Oration* 5, at 172), and genetic feature of the Moon; Beck (2006), 74–7 for a comparison of the symbolic system of the Chamulas and the mysteries of Mithras.

23 See Coxon (2009), 275–6.

commentary on the story of Atlantis in the *Timaeus* (F 16 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.147.6-24 Diehl), Porphyry identifies the Moon as the counter-Earth, the 'heavenly/aethereal Earth' (αἰθέρια γῆ). As for Burkert, Porphyry's identification is closely related to the idea of 'astral immortality' and to the Moon-Hades in the late tradition. Porphyry traces back the concept of the Moon as the aethereal Earth to the Egyptians, as related to the process of the descent of the soul into *genesis*:[24]

> Ὁ δέ γε φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος … ἐξηγούμενος τὸν μὲν Ἥφαιστον <τὸν> τεχνικὸν ὑποτίθεται νοῦν, γῆν δὲ τὴν σεληνιακὴν σφαῖραν· ταύτην γὰρ αἰθερίαν γῆν καλεῖσθαι παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις. τὰς οὖν ψυχὰς τὰς ἀπὸ μὲν θεοῦ ὑποστάσας, τοῦ δὲ τεχνικοῦ νοῦ μετεχούσας εἰς ⟦τε⟧ τὸ τῆς σελήνης σῶμα σπείρεσθαί φησιν, ὡς ἐκεῖ πολιτευομένας τὰς τεχνικὰς τῶν ψυχῶν, σώματα δ' ἐχούσας ἀπορροίας ὄντα τῶν αἰθερίων σωμάτων.
>
> But the philosopher Porphyry, when he interprets this, hypothesizes that Hephaestus is technical expertise, and earth is the lunar sphere, since [the moon] is called 'the earth of ether' (aethereal Earth) by the Egyptians. So the souls that have received their existence from god but participate in technical expertise are sown into the body of the moon, he says, because that is where the technically expert sort of soul belongs, and they have bodies that are effluences of the bodies of ether (aethereal bodies).

After shortly referring to Plato's *Gorgias* (mixing bowls and wine jars) and *Republic* (entrances), Porphyry cites Pherekydes of Syros and says that when he speaks of recesses, holes, caves, gates and doors, Pherekydes hints at *genesis* and *apogenesis* of souls through them (τοῦ Συρίου Φερεκύδου μυχοὺς καὶ βόθρους καὶ ἄντρα καὶ θύρας καὶ πύλας λέγοντος καὶ διὰ τούτων αἰνιττομένου[25] τὰς τῶν ψυχῶν γενέσεις καὶ ἀπογενέσεις, *De Antro* 31.7-9).[26] As Schibli points out, 'Porphyry's list, (including οἱ μυχοί), is suitably taken as referring to the nether world in the traditional conception of the sixth century B.C.E.' Recesses, holes, caves, grottoes, doors, gates are the right terms for the description of the underworld. The usage of μῦχός also occurs in *Sententia* 29.35, in reference to the meaning of 'depth of the Earth' (μὔχός τῆς γῆς) when Porphyry speaks of the pneumatic body as naturally inclined to descending into the depths of the Earth even after it has left the earthly body. Another usage of the word is found

24 Trans. Tarrant (2007), 243–4; Burkert (1972), 233 n. 78.

25 West (1971), 25 n.3; Schibli (1990), 117 n.30.

26 Schibli (1990), 117–21 for a discussion of Pherekydes, F 88 = 7 B 6 DK; ibid. 174.

in his commentary on the *Timaeus* (F 79.30 Sodano), which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Timaeus* (μυχῶν τῆς γῆς, *In Tim.* 3.64.8-65), in relation to the reasons for the irregular speeds of the seven planets. Here, Porphyry uses μῦχός in the same way as in *Sententia* 29.35, except that it contains the statement that the depth of the Earth is the last place of the process of generation. The passage in his commentary on the *Timaeus* (F 79 Sodano = Theodorus, testimonium 17 Deuse) also shows the complexities of the triad Being-Intellect-Life and provides evidence for its origins in Neoplatonic metaphysics:[27]

> Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξηγηταὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ζητήσαντες ἐπὶ τὰς ζωὰς αὐτῶν ἀνήγαγον τὴν τῆς ἰσότητος καὶ ἀνισότητος τῶν δρόμων ἀρχήν, ὥσπερ δή φασι Πορφύριός τε καὶ Θεόδωρος· ἔστι γὰρ κατ' αὐτοὺς τὸ ἀνισοταχὲς ἢ ἰσοταχὲς παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεν ἢ διὰ πλειόνων φέρεσθαι τοὺς νόας ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ καταστρέφειν, εἰ καὶ δι' ἄλλων μέσων, ἢ καὶ εἰς ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο· ἥλιος μὲν γὰρ οὐσία ὢν ἐπὶ νοῦν ὁδεύει διὰ ζωῆς, Ἀφροδίτη δὲ νοῦς μέν, ἀλλὰ διὰ ζωῆς ἐπὶ νοῦν, Ἑρμῆς δὲ ζωὴ μέν, διὰ δὲ <οὐσίας> εἰς νοῦν· εἰ καὶ ὁ νοῦς οὗτος, ἐφ' ὃν ἡ καταστροφὴ τοῖς τρισίν, ὅπου μέν ἐστιν οὐσιώδης, ὅπου δὲ νοερός, ὅπου δὲ ζωτικός· διὸ καὶ ἀνισοταχῶς κινούμενοι καὶ ἀλλήλων ἀπολείπεσθαι καὶ προηγεῖσθαι δοκοῦντες εἰς ταὐτὸν καταλήγουσι. Κρόνος δὲ καὶ Ζεὺς καὶ Ἄρης δύναιντο μὲν ἂν καὶ διαφόρων εἶναι τμημάτων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἰσοταχεῖς· εἰ δὲ καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἶεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ μὴ πρὸς <τὸ> αὐτὸ καταστρέφειν ἢ μὴ διὰ τῶν ἴσων μεσοτήτων οὐκ ἰσοταχεῖς· οἷον εἰ Κρόνος μὲν αὐτόθεν οὐσία ὢν ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ἴοι, Ζεὺς δὲ διὰ νοῦ μόνον, Ἄρης δὲ διὰ νοῦ καὶ ζωῆς, ἔσται ὃ μὲν ἀμέσως ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, ὃ δὲ διὰ μιᾶς μεσότητος, ὃ δὲ διὰ δυεῖν, καὶ οὕτως οὐκ ἰσοταχεῖς· ἔστι γὰρ τῶν πλανωμένων ἡ μὲν πρώτη τριὰς ἐπὶ οὐσίαν, ἡ δὲ δευτέρα ἐπὶ νοῦν ἀναγομένη, σελήνη δὲ ἐπὶ ζωήν, πᾶσαν τὴν γένεσιν ἐν ἑαυτῇ περιέχουσα καὶ προϊοῦσα μέχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων μυχῶν τῆς γῆς. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν φασι Πορφύριός τε καὶ Θεόδωρος, οἰκείας ὑποθέσεις περαίνοντες, πανταχοῦ μὲν πάντα λέγοντες, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὴν ζωήν, καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν θεῶν μετέχειν τιθέμενοι τῶν τριῶν πατέρων, ἐπικρατεῖν δὲ ἄλλο ἐν ἄλλοις ἰδίωμα, καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἄλλων εἶναι ἄλλην καὶ δι' ἄλλων μέσων τὴν ἀναγωγήν.
>
> The commentators from the school of Plato, on the other hand, in their investigation of the cause of this, have related the origin of the equality and inequality of the circuits to the vital principles of the planets concerned, as indeed Porphyry and Theodorus declare. According to them,

27 Trans. Dillon (2004), 212–13; Baltzly (2013), 129–30 n. 245 for a discussion of the triad in relation to the irregular speeds of the seven planets. See also Edwards (1990a), 15–16 for a discussion of the origin and sequence of the triad.

> the equality or inequality of speed is a function of the direct or mediated relation of the intellects [of these planets] to the essence and whether they tend towards the same goal, even if through different intermediaries, or towards different ones in each case. Thus, the Sun, qua Being, proceeds towards Intellect via Life; Venus is Intellect, certainly, but proceeds towards Intellect via Life; Mercury is Life, but proceeds via Being to Intellect; and even if Intellect is the goal of the reversion of all three, yet, in the one case, it is of the essential order; in another, of the intellectual; and in another, of the vital. And that is why these planets, though moving at different speeds and giving the appearance of alternately passing each other and leaving each other behind, yet all finish at the same point. As for Saturn and Jupiter and Mars, it is possible that they belong to different divisions [of Intellect], and, for that reason, that they are not of the same speed. If, however, they belong to the same, they will be of unequal speed, either because they do not return to the same goal or because they do not do that through an equal number of intermediaries. For example, if Saturn, being Being, proceeds to Being without any intermediary, if Jupiter proceeds to it via Intellect alone, and if Mars does so via Intellect and Life, one will rest in Being immediately, the second via one intermediary, and the third via two, and so they will not be equal in speed. In fact, among the planets, the first triad is directed towards Being, the second towards Intellect, and the Moon towards Life, because it [Life] comprehends within itself the whole of generation and proceeds as far as the ultimate recesses of the Earth (μυχῶν τῆς γῆς). This, then, is the view of Porphyry and Theodorus, pursuing their own distinctive hypotheses, declaring that all – Being (or Essence) and Life and Intellect – are everywhere. They postulate that each of the gods participates in all three fathers, but that a different property predominates in each; that the activity of each is different in each one of them; and that their ascent to their goal is through different intermediaries.

This quite lengthy fragment provides valuable insights into how Porphyry considers the Sun and the Moon in the Neoplatonic metaphysical and cosmological scheme. We can make inferences from the fragment about Porphyry's identification of the Sun and the Moon with the gates for the soul through the theologians, as the soul ascends through the former and descends through the latter. The passage is part of the argument of the subject originating from the exegesis of *Timaeus* 38d, in which Timaeus states that the speeds of the circles of Venus and Mercury are, on average, the same as the speed of the Sun, whereas the remaining planets all have different speeds. It should be noted that the

sequence of the planets given as Sun, Mercury and Venus in *Timaeus* 38c7-d is in accord with that given in *De Antro* 22.2-6.[28]

In the fragment, in accordance with Proclus' report, Porphyry explains the reasons for the irregular speeds of the seven planets through their direct or indirect relations with the triad, that is Being (or Essence), Intellect (or Mind), and Life (or Potency), and for the opposition of Mercury and Venus to the Sun. The idea is based upon the projection of the triad on the planetary divinities at the celestial level, so that the planets return towards one of the principles according to their configuration. In conformity with his interest in the relationship of the soul and body, and his ethical concern, Porphyry associates the equal and unequal speeds of the planets and the opposition of Mercury and Venus to the Sun with the distinction of the souls of the planets, and Dillon claims that his association of the triad with the planets is an application of the triadic structure in the *Chaldean Oracles*.[29] Although the planets participate in each noetic principle, the predominant principle plays a significant role according to how many intermediaries the planets have to pass through in order to reach their targeted principle. As regards those having different speeds, Saturn, as Being, is not in need of any intermediary to proceed through Being. Jupiter, as Intellect, is in need of one intermediary so that it proceeds to Being through Intellect, and, lastly, Mars, as Life, is in need of two intermediaries so that it proceeds to Being through Intellect and Life. On the other hand, the Sun, Mercury and Venus, which on average have the same speed, are in need of only one intermediary to proceed to Intellect, even though their ways to Intellect are different.

I propose a connection between Porphyry's division of the triad Being-Intellect-Life at the celestial level and the assignment of the Sun and the Moon to the gates for the soul in *De Antro* 29.12-14. The association of the planets with the principle of the triad, starting from the top to the bottom, would be as follows: the first triad of the planets, that is Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, is led towards Being; the second triad, that is Venus, Mars and the Sun, towards Intellect; and the Moon towards Life which stretches out as far as the depths of the Earth. The Moon as the descending gate for the soul in *De Antro* is in accord with the idea presented above in the passage which states that the predominant principle and the goal of the Moon are Life, which contains all the

28 See *Rep*. 616d-e for the order of the planets as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Sun and Moon. The order of the planets given in *De Antro* is based on Hellenistic and later astronomy, Beck (2000b), 554–5 and (2004), 115–16.

29 Dillon (2009), 356. See Chapter 2, 'Mithras as the Maker and Father of All, and as the Ruler of *Genesis*' for a discussion of the identification of Hecate, Life, in the Chaldean triad with Mithras as the master of *genesis*.

generative activities in itself. The positioning of the Sun in the list after the Moon and the Sun's participation in the group of the planets tending towards Intellect are also in accord with its representation as the ascending gate for the soul in *De Antro*. The Sun seems to be the first divinity, marking the boundary between the region subjected to generation and the path leading the soul up to the intelligible realm.

We note that not only Porphyry but also Plutarch, too, connects Intellect with the Sun (*De Genio* 591b), though without mentioning the gates.[30] Moreover, in *De Facie* 945b-c, Plutarch states that during the process of generation the Earth provides body, the Moon the soul and the Sun Intellect.[31] In the reverse process, after the soul has left the body together with Intellect, Intellect is then detached from the soul at the level of the Sun. The connection of the Sun with Intellect is clearly reminiscent of Plato's metaphor of the Sun in the *Republic* (507b-509c), in which he likens the Sun to the child of goodness so that with its light the Sun uncovers the true nature of the objects as the source of truth and knowledge in the material world. More importantly, the idea originates in the analogy of the cave in *Republic* 7, in which the liberated prisoner escapes from a deceptive world to the world of realities through the Sun, and is enabled to see things clearly.

2 Philosophy: the Great Liberator of the Soul

This section examines the fate of the soul after death in *De Antro* 29.5 according to Porphyry's classification of the journey of the soul through the intelligible realm. For Porphyry, the pneumatic vehicle is an indispensable part of the discussion of the ascent of the soul and its descent, in the context of purification of the soul which is necessary for its separation from the body. His *On the Return of the Soul*, which is preserved in Augustine's *City of God*, states that theurgy affects to some extent the purification of the pneumatic vehicle, but the rational part of the soul is in need of philosophy.[32] Therefore, the section aims to show that leading a philosophical life is a *sine qua non* for completing the successful journey of the soul through the intelligible realm. Next, it focuses on two significant phrases in the treatise: 'stripped himself of his rags'

30 See Dillon (2014), 67–8 for a discussion of the connections of Intellect and the soul with the Sun and the Moon.

31 Simonini (2010), 226.

32 Finamore (1985), 4; Shaw (1995), 5 calls Plotinus and Porphyry the nontheurgical Platonists, and Iamblichus the theurgical.

in *De Antro* 35.13 and 'Odysseus surrounded by souls ignorant of maritime and material activities' in *De Antro* 35.15-16, which are closely related to the actions that the soul should take for a successful journey towards the intelligible realm, or for the way it should live.

Plato's main concern in the myth of Er is to emphasise how one should choose one's way of life in this life and in the afterlife. Consequently, this leads us to regard the limit of a person's free-will in Porphyry's thought reflected in a fragmentary treatise, *On What Is In Our Power*, which is preserved in Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (2.8.39-42). This analysis contributes to our understanding of the extent to which Porphyry's division of the form of life can be compatible with the choices of souls in the myth of Er; for example, the first soul chooses a tyrannical life despite having previously led a good life, Odysseus, as the last soul, intentionally chooses to live apart from society.

Lastly, it examines Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with practical wisdom in *De Antro* 32.12 as well as his different identification of the goddess with the Moon in his commentary on the story of Atlantis in the *Timaeus* (F 22 Sodano) and *On Images* (F 359.60-62 Smith). Since Porphyry's ultimate goal in *De Antro* is to illustrate that leading a philosophical life, attainable only through wisdom, is the only route to the salvation of the soul, it is reflected in his identification of Athena with *phronesis*. In order to support this claim, this should be read from the perspective of the cathartic virtues in *Sententia* 32. In this text, Porphyry formulates the Neoplatonic doctrine of virtues, namely the political, the cathartic, the theoretical, and the paradigmatic virtues. Those virtues play a significant role in the Neoplatonic tradition, and they show that human excellence can be achieved in stages. These stages depend on distinct moral and philosophical achievements. In *the City of God,* Augustine eulogises Porphyry for maintaining that the human soul would be re-embodied only in human bodies, contrary to Plato and Plotinus.[33] Augustine's statement can be considered a testimony that Porphyry sees one's evolution in this life as playing a vital role in the struggle towards attaining the intelligible realm. The relevant passages of *Sententia* 32 will help us to see at which level of virtue Odysseus achieves, and the role of Athena or *phronesis* in the process of his ascent through the intelligible realm.

2.1 *The Journey through the Intelligible Realm*

According to Augustine's report in *De Civitate Dei* (10.32.5-16 = F 302 Smith), Porphyry is said to have never acquainted himself with the universal path for the salvation of the soul, either through the truest philosophy, or through the

33 *Civ. Dei* 10.30.1–10 = F 300 Smith.

practices and discipline of the Indians, or through the inductive reasoning of the Chaldeans.[34] However, Clark states that the phrase 'beyond any doubt' (procul dubio, F 302.20 Smith) indicates that Porphyry conversely accepts that there is not a single way for the liberation of the soul.[35] Even so, Porphyry's ultimate aim is to show that only philosophy liberates the rational part of the soul, as stated in *De Antro* 29.5, in which he explicitly affirms the ascent of the soul through the intelligible, with reference to Plato and the theologians. This evidence of Porphyry's views, to a certain extent, contradicts and therefore casts doubt on some of Augustine's testimony, particularly the part asserting that the 'universal way of the salvation of the soul' (uniuersalis uia animae liberandae) has not been received 'from any very true philosophy' (a philosophia uerissima aliqua):

> (29.4-7) Ἀρξαμένης γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἀπὸ ἑτερότητος πανταχοῦ τὸ δίθυρον αὐτῆς πεποίηνται σύμβολον. ἢ γὰρ διὰ νοητοῦ ἡ πορεία ἢ δι' αἰσθητοῦ· καὶ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀπλανοῦς ἢ διὰ τῆς τῶν πεπλανημένων, καὶ πάλιν ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀθανάτου ἢ διὰ τῆς θνητῆς πορείας.
>
> (29.4-7) Since nature originated from the principle of dissimilarity, that which has two entrances was made a symbol of her everywhere. For the journey is either through the intelligible or through the sensible; if it is through the sensible, it is either through the fixed stars or through the seven planets, and again it is either through the immortal or through the mortal journey.

In this passage, Porphyry's classification of the journey of ascent and descent of the soul, through the intelligible realm and through the sensible realm, implies the existence of the different types of separation of the soul from the body and different types of union. Porphyry focuses on the journey through the sensible, which is either through the fixed stars or through the seven planets, despite the fact that he does not elaborate on the ascending route of the

34 Lloyd (1967), 287–93 for a discussion of Plotinus' rejection of ritual practices and Porphyry's unfavourable view on theurgy is a reflection of their view of the undescended soul in contrast to Iamblichus' view of the descended soul as an explanation of his practice of theurgic rituals. See also Shaw (1995), 14–15 for a comparison of Porphyry's and Iamblichus' views on theurgy.

35 Clark (2007), 136–40; Addey (2014a), 47–50; see also Smith (1974), 136–9 suggests that Porphyry might have three interpretations in mind: a way of salvation for all humans, or for all nations or ethnic groups, or a way of total liberation for the soul without discriminating the parts of the soul.

soul through the intelligible.[36] Even so, in the subsequent passages of *De Antro* (34–35), he concludes that it becomes impossible for the soul to free itself from earthly life unless it entirely rids itself of passions identified with moistness. What Porphyry means by this remark is that only the dominance of reason over sense-perception can lead the soul to dwell in the realm of Intellect, the real habitat or homeland of the soul. Porphyry's brief statement may be deemed the favoured aspect of separation of the soul from the body because of its ascent to the intelligible realm. In his *Sententiae* 8 and 9, we learn how separation between the soul and the body occurs so that the soul binds itself to and unbinds itself from the body, while it is nature that binds the body to the soul and unbinds it from the soul:[37]

> (8) Ὃ ἔδησεν ἡ φύσις, τοῦτο φύσις λύει, καὶ ὃ ἔδησεν ἡ ψυχή, τοῦτο αὐτὴ λύει, ἔδησε δὲ φύσις μὲν σῶμα ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δὲ ἑαυτὴν ἐν σώματι. φύσις μὲν ἄρα λύει σῶμα ἐκ ψυχῆς, ψυχὴ δὲ ἑαυτὴν λύει ἀπὸ σώματος.
>
> What nature has bound together, that nature may loose, and what soul has bound together, that it itself may loose; but nature has bound body in soul, while soul has bound itself in body. It is nature, therefore, that releases body from soul, but soul that releases itself from body.
>
> (9) Ὁ θάνατος διπλοῦς, ὁ μὲν οὖν συνεγνωσμένος λυομένου τοῦ σώματος ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς, ὁ δὲ τῶν φιλοσόφων λυομένης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος, καὶ οὐ πάντως ὁ ἕτερος τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἕπεται.
>
> Death is of two sorts: the one is the generally recognised one involving the loosing of the body from the soul; the other is that of the philosophers, involving the soul loosing itself from the body; and it is not always necessary that either should follow upon the other.

Sententia 9 is important to us, for Porphyry draws a distinction between the conventional and the philosophical understanding of death. Especially, the last sentence of *Sententia* 9 implies that the soul's 'self-detachment' from the body does not lead to the detachment of the body from the soul, and it would be a hint at the ascent of the soul towards the intelligible realm while still living its

36 See Wilberding (2011), 127–8, on the status of the souls in the myth of Er, concludes that 'for Porphyry as for Proclus, the myth of Er is not primarily about the souls that are descending from the intelligible region.'

37 Trans. Dillon (2005), 796–7; Smith (1974), 21–3.

corporeal life, which Smith calls 'spiritual death,'[38] as it is also implied in *De Antro* 29.5. In fact, Porphyry is familiar with spiritual death because of Plotinus' spiritual and autobiographical experiences discussed in the treatise *On the Descent of Soul into Body* (*Enn.* 4.8.1.1-11), in which he speaks several times of his union with Intellect. Plotinus defines his temporary 'dwelling in the divine' (ἡ ἐν τῷ θείῳ στάσις) as 'raised into myself from the body, coming to be external to all other things and inside of myself,' ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ γινόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἐμαυτοῦ δὲ εἴσω (*Enn.* 4.8.1.1-2).

On the other hand, the journey of the soul through the sensible, through the fixed stars or the seven planets, may also be deemed to be the negative aspect of the spiritual death of the soul because of the dominance of the irrational part of the soul over the rational. The ascent of the soul through the intelligible is definitely the route of those who lead philosophical lives. The soul's journey through the sensible is the route of ordinary men doomed to multiple rebirths because of the limited capability of sacrifices offered to gods, and of the soul's provisional avoidance of corporeal things. Concerning the relation to the long journey of Odysseus, Porphyry explicitly remarks that all the sufferings of the hero will end, once he has entirely liberated himself from pleasures, passions, angers and fears; in other words, from all the features manifested in the irrational part of the soul. Porphyry's narrative in *De Antro* 35.10-17 guarantees a successful journey for Odysseus, that is, for the soul to return to its homeland, the intelligible realm. Nevetheless, the success of the journey is not guaranteed, since Odysseus' stripping off his rags is not a sufficient effort to rid himself of toils caused by the material world:

> (35.10-17) οὓς χρὴ πρότερον ἀπομειλίξασθαι θυσίαις τε καὶ πτωχοῦ πόνοις καὶ καρτερίαις, ποτὲ μὲν διαμαχόμενον τοῖς πάθεσι, ποτὲ δὲ γοητεύοντα καὶ ἀπατῶντα καὶ παντοίως πρὸς αὐτὰ μεταβαλλόμενον, ἵνα γυμνωθεὶς τῶν ῥακέων καθέλῃ πάντα καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως ἀπαλλαγῇ τῶν πόνων, ἀλλ' ὅταν παντελῶς ἔξαλος γένηται καὶ ἐν ψυχαῖς ἀπείροις θαλασσίων καὶ ἐνύλων ἔργων, ὡς πτύον εἶναι ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν κώπην διὰ τὴν τῶν ἐναλίων ὀργάνων καὶ ἔργων παντελῆ ἀπειρίαν.
>
> (35.10-17) He must first appease these gods (the gods of the sea and of matter) with sacrifices, and with labours and perseverance of a beggar (Odysseus), contending against the passions at one time, and beguiling and cheating them at another and changing himself in all kinds of ways

38 For the Neoplatonic treatment of the natural and spiritual death of the soul see Smith (1974), 22 n. 6.

> according to them that stripped himself of his rags, he might overpower them all, even not completely be in relief from all labours. However, he will be released from all toils when entirely freed himself from the sea, he belongs to souls ignorant in the deeds of the sea and matter, that the oar is deemed to be a winnowing-shovel because of absolute ignorance of nautical instruments and deeds.

In this passage, the verb γυμνόω, 'strip naked,' (*De Antro* 35.13) is an echo of Plato's *Gorgias* 524d5, whereby he implies the soul's 'dissociation from the body' (γυμνωθῇ τοῦ σώματος, *Gorg*. 524d5). Plato claims that the soul reflects all its experiences and features because of its various pursuits in this life, and uses his own myth of the Judgement of Souls (*Gorg*. 523a-527a) in order to explain why the soul is judged naked by the naked judges so that any misleading decision by appearances is prevented in the reign of Zeus. Also, the image of the 'naked' soul (γυμνῆτες) is frequently used in antiquity; for example, F 116 des Places in the *Chaldean Oracles* (= Procl., *In Crat.* 88.4-6), nakedness signifies the freedom of the soul from its material substances.[39] In *Ennead* 1.6.7.1-12, Plotinus speaks of sacred rites where initiates strip off their clothes in order to be purified, and enter 'naked' (γυμνοῖς) into initiation before proceeding to go up, casting off all that is alien to the God.

There are a number of close similarities between *De Abstinentia* 1.30 and 1.31, and *De Antro* 33 and 35.10-15. For example, in *De Antro* 33.10-13, Porphyry draws an analogy between victorious athletes and the soul released from many toils, and in *De Abstinentia* 1.31.13-17, he urges his audiences to go to the stadium and compete in the Olympiad of the soul after it is stripped naked. In reference to victorious athletes in *De Antro*, Poprhyry hints at the olive wreath, which was the prize of victorious athletes in the ancient Olympic Games. A victor who received the olive wreath can be considered as a symbol of the soul who is under the guidance of the rational part of the soul because the olive tree is the plant of the goddess Athena, and Porphyry associates her with *phronesis* in *De Antro* 32.12.[40]

In *De Abstinentia* 1.31.17-1.32.1 (ἀποδύειν), Porphyry employs the metaphor of 'stripping of one's garments' in the same way as *De Antro* 35.13 (γυμνοῦσθαι),[41] and he considers it the initial stage of the soul's passive involvement in earthly life. Of course, there cannot be an entire separation from corporeal things, particularly while living in the material world, and the journey of the soul

39 Majercik (2013), 92–3 and 186.

40 See the next section for a discussion of Porphyry's identification of Athena as *phronesis*.

41 *Od*. 21.1.

concentrates on rising to the intellectual life where our actions and thoughts ought not to be in conflict with each other. Porphyry also remarks in *Sententia* 7 that being in the state of impassivity is the way of liberation from corporeal things provided by the material world as detachment from the body is within the capacity of the soul. There is no doubt that impassivity towards all kinds of pleasures, emotions, power and wealth in the soul's journey towards truth is a *sine qua non* for the philosophical way of life; that is the kind of mental condition that should provide a permanent liberation of the soul:[42]

> Ψυχὴ καταδεῖται πρὸς σῶμα τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ τῇ πρὸς τὰ πάθη τὰ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ λύεται δὲ πάλιν διὰ τῆς ἀπαθείας.
>
> A soul binds itself to body through directing its attention towards the affections which derive from it, and is freed from it, in turn, through (the achievement of) impassibility.

In Porphyry's view, as mentioned earlier, the pneumatic vehicle, *ochema*, is closely connected with the process of the ascent of the soul, but also with the process of its descent. The bonds of the soul with the material world will not only be strengthened if the soul becomes attracted to corporeal things, but the pneumatic body will be defiled by the thick, heavy, dark and moist *pneuma* of the soul.[43] We may, therefore, consider the rags or garments in *De Antro* 35.13 as a symbol of substances which are acquired from each sphere by the soul during its descent into the material world. Those substances which generate the pneumatic part of the soul, the aethereal, solar and lunar bodies respectively dissolve into their original states in the process of disembodiment in accordance with Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus* (F 80 Sodano), which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Timaeus* 41d1-2 (*In Tim.* 3.234.18-26 Diehl). Porphyry and his followers are part of Proclus' threefold doxographical discussion about which part of the soul is immortal and which part is mortal:[44]

> οἱ δὲ τούτων μετριώτεροι, ὥσπερ οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον, καὶ πρᾳότεροι παραιτοῦνται μὲν τὴν καλουμένην φθορὰν κατασκεδαννύναι τοῦ τε ὀχήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, ἀναστοιχειοῦσθαι δὲ αὐτά φασι καὶ ἀναλύεσθαί τινα τρόπον εἰς τὰς σφαίρας, ἀφ' ὧν τὴν σύνθεσιν ἔλαχε, φυράματα δὲ εἶναι ταῦτα ἐκ τῶν

42 Trans. Dillon (2005), 796.

43 See Chapter 3, 'The Pneumatic Body.'

44 Trans. Chase (2004b), 20; for a detailed discussion of Proclus' doxography see Dillon (2009), 371–7.

> οὐρανίων σφαιρῶν καὶ κατιοῦσαν αὐτὰ συλλέγειν τὴν ψυχήν, ὥστε καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα καὶ μὴ εἶναι, αὐτὰ δὲ ἕκαστα μηκέτ' εἶναι μηδὲ διαμένειν τὴν ἰδιότητα αὐτῶν.
>
> Those who are more moderate and more gentle, like Porphyry, refuse to spread the so-called destruction of the *okhêma* and the irrational soul, but they say they are resolved into their elements and dissolved, in some way, into the same spheres from which they obtained their composition; they say they are mixtures (*phuramata*) from the celestial spheres, and that when it descends, the soul collects them, so that they exist and do not exist, but they no longer exist as such, nor does their distinguishing characteristic persevere.

Additional evidence is also found in *De Anima* 37 of Iamblichus (= Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.49.43.33-42), showing that, as Finamore states, Proclus draws on Iamblichus' commentary, since the ideas are consistent in both passages:[45]

> τοὺς δὲ περὶ Πλωτῖνον τῆς στάσεως προισταμένους ἐκείνης τῆς χωριζούσης αὐτὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου, ἢ καὶ ἀφιείσης εἰς τὴν γένεσιν, ἢ καὶ ἀφαιρούσης ἀπὸ τῆς διανοίας, ἀφ' ἧς πάλιν διττῆς δόξης γίγνεται διάκρισις. Ἤτοι γὰρ λύεται ἑκάστη δύναμις ἄλογος εἰς τὴν ὅλην ζωὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀφ' ἧς ἀπεμερίσθη, ᾗ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα μένει ἀμετάβλητος, ὥσπερ ἡγεῖται Πορφύριος· ἢ καὶ χωρισθεῖσα ἀπὸ τῆς διανοίας ἡ ὅλη ἄλογος ζωὴ μένει καὶ αὐτὴ διασῳζομένη ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ὥσπερ οἱ παλαιότατοι τῶν ἱερέων ἀποφαίνονται.
>
> Plotinus and his school, on the other hand, champion the opinion that separates the irrational faculties from the reasoning element, either releasing them into the realm of generation or separating them from the discursive reasoning. From this opinion arises a choice between two doctrines. Either each irrational faculty is freed into the whole life of the universe from which it was detached, where each remains as far as possible unchanged, as Porphyry thinks. Or the whole irrational life continues to exist, separated from the discursive reasoning and preserved in the cosmos, as the most ancient of the priests declare.

45 Trans. Finamore (2002), 66–7 and 182–3 for the discussion. See also Smith (1974), 65; Dillon (2009), 375–6. On the discrepancies between Porphyry and Iamblichus see Finamore (1985), 11–27.

The pneumatic vehicle is invisible in the state of purity, whereas it becomes visible or material, clothed with the soul's last garment, flesh and blood in the process of embodiment, as I have discussed in the previous chapter.[46] The reverse process, that is the process of the ascent of the soul, involves the pneumatic vehicle and the irrational part of the soul losing their composition, and being resolved themselves into their elements, which are then given back to their original spheres or bodies.[47] As a consequence of this process, their particular character does not persist in their mixed forms, but their existence continues in the spheres or bodies in which they originally developed. According to Porphyry's belief, the separation of the rational part of the soul from the irrational is appropriate to a privileged group of souls that would not be subjected to numerous embodiments. On the one hand, he believes that the gods are not different from humans in essence (*De Abstinentia* 3.7.5) because of the immortality and divinity of the rational part of the soul, a point at which he also hints in *De Antro* 23.3-6 (τὰ δὲ νότια οὐ θεῶν, ἀλλὰ τῶν εἰς θεοὺς ἀνιουσῶν, διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν δ' αἰτίαν οὐ θεῶν ἔφη ὁδός, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων, ὃ κοινὸν καὶ ἐπὶ ψυχῶν ὡς οὐσῶν καθ' αὑτὸ ἢ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἀθανάτων). On the other hand, he claims that Socrates, the good soul, is not even good in the same way as Aristotle and Plato, or that of bad souls some are better and some worse (*De Abstinentia* 3.8.37-41). Porphyry's belief in the existence of a hierarchy of souls manifests itself in his view that Platonism was limited to an intellectual elite, as Shaw observes.[48]

As regards 'souls inexperienced or ignorant of the deeds of the sea and matter,' ἐν ψυχαῖς ἀπείροις θαλασσίων καὶ ἐνύλων ἔργων, in *De Antro* 35.15-16, the phrase refers to *Odyssey* 11.126-134 where Tiresias prophesies that after taking his revenge on the suitors, Odysseus would come to a place where 'men do not know of the sea' (οἳ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν ἀνέρες, *Od.* 11.123-124). The use of ἄπειρος also occurs in *De Antro* 34.7-10 (F 33 des Places = Test. 45 Leemans), when Porphyry refers to Numenius' interpretation of Odysseus 'returning to those who are ignorant of every wave and sea,' ἀποκαθισταμένου εἰς τοὺς ἔξω παντὸς κλύδωνος καὶ θαλάσσης ἀπείρους, after having passed through the stages of *genesis*. On the basis of these two statements, we can safely assume that the souls who have nothing to do with sea and matter refer to those who

46 See F 259 Smith (= Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* 3.38.12-40) for Porphyry's discussion of the soul which is united with the body but remains unblended, drawing on Ammonius, the teacher of Plotinus. See also trans. Dillon (2004), 195–8.

47 This belief finds support in the *Chaldean Oracles*, see for this F 61 des Places; Chase (2004b), 11; Dillon (2009), 373.

48 Shaw (1995), 14.

would no more be subjected to embodiment, or have no experience with embodiment.[49]

These statements raise the question of to what extent one should detach oneself from the earthly life, while living in this life, and if Porphyry deems a life in the material world to be a toil. In *De Abstinentia* 1.32.9-1.33.1, he describes the best detachment, accompanied with constant meditation on the intelligibles, as abstinence from perceptions which awake passions, and which also arises from nourishment. Later, he gives more details about detachment in *De Abstinentia* 1.33.14-1.34.1:[50]

> αἱ δὲ ἀποστάσεις διὰ τῶν ἐκκλίσεων τῶν κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις παθῶν καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἀλογίας, αἱ δὲ αἰσθήσεις ἢ διὰ τῶν ὁρατῶν ἢ τῶν ἀκουστῶν ἢ γευστῶν ἢ ὀσφραντῶν ἢ ἁπτῶν. οἷον γὰρ μητρόπολις ἡ αἴσθησις ἦν τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκφύλου τῶν παθῶν ἀποικίας. φέρε γὰρ ἴδε καθ' ἑκάστην ὅσον τὸ ὑπέκκαυμα εἰσρεῖ τῶν παθῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς, τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς κατὰ τὰς θέας ἵππων τε ἀμίλλης καὶ ἀθλητῶν ἢ τῶν ἐκλελυγισμένων ὀρχήσεων, τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐπιβλέψεως τῆς πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ, αἷ δέλεαρ τοῦ ἀλογίστου παντοίαις ἐπιθέτοις παγίσι χειροῦνται τὸ ἄλογον.
>
> Detachment comes by avoiding the passions that go with perception and those that go with unreason. Perceptions come from things seen or heard or tasted or smelled or touched. Perception is like the mother-city of the alien colony of passions in ourselves. See how much there is that inflames the passions that flow into us with each perception, perhaps from the sight of contests of horses and athletes or of dissolute dancing, perhaps from looking at the female; such sights are the bait for unreason, and bring it under their control with all kinds of additional snares.

In this passage, Porphyry sees perception and unreason stimulating passions, and apparently every stimulus related to senses is alien to the soul and a trap for the irrational. He continues to describe how sensual stimuli arouse emotional turbulences and damage in the soul in *De Abstinentia* 1.34. Referring to the Pythagoreans and former sages, who lived in isolated places, temples and sacred groves of the cities and to Plato's *Theaetetus* 173c-174a, he defends a life which is simple, self-sufficient and involved with material things at the

49 Chase (2004b), 15 says, 'After physical death, the process of ethical progress may continue; the practitioner of theoretical virtues, who lives according to the intellect and has eliminated the passions, becomes a god.'

50 Clark (2000), 43–4.

minimum level because of the impossibility of involving oneself in everyday life without being unaffected by it (*De Abstinentia* 1.35-1.37).[51] In this regard, Odysseus, who decisively chooses a detached attitude to life after suffering so many years in the material world in the myth of Er (*Rep*. 620d), might be an appropriate model for detachment defined in the quoted passages from *De Abstinentia*. In his *Life of Plotinus* (*VPlot*. 7.31-46), Porphyry likewise speaks of how Rogatianus, a senator of the third century, detached himself (ἀπόστᾰσις) from politics and became the pupil of Plotinus for the sake of leading a philosophical life. The Homeric hero of *De Antro*, Odysseus, becomes an ideal model, who is in contact with the intelligible realm like a philosopher or like the disciples of Plotinus, detached from every honour, dignity, wealth and power derived from the material world, someone who internalises philosophy as a way of life.

The last question is how free will affects choices for the afterlife, and the earthly life, as Socrates underlines that both are equally important, which may be likened to a chain reaction in which one affects the other (*Rep*. 618e-619a). In his *Περὶ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν*, which is either an exegesis of a treatise on the myth of Er, Porphyry distinguishes two forms of life.[52] The first form of life, which is predetermined, is related to the biological lives of various animals and human beings, who also have different genders (F 268.48-55 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.39.47-53). The second form of life, which is self-determined, provides opportunities for determining one's own way of life in the Earth (F 268.54-61 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.39.52-59). The predetermined and self-determined lives inevitably affect each other. For Porphyry (F 268.61-75 Smith = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.39.59-72), only human souls have the power to choose the self-determined life,[53] even if this life is not fully under our control, because inherited and acquired features influence what is within our power on the Earth:[54]

> Ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν ἀλόγοις, ἀφῃρημένοις τοῦ αὐτεξουσίου, ἢ διὰ φύσεως ὁ χαρακτὴρ οὗτος ἐπισυνίσταται ἢ διὰ κατατάξεως τοῦ κτησαμένου· ἐπὶ δὲ

51 Clark (2000), 44–5.

52 Wilberding (2011), 123–32 and (2013), 87–105 for a detailed discussion of Porphyry's conception of free-will.

53 F 270.11-15 Smith (= Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.41.10-14) the faculty of self-determination varies according to the condition of living beings; human beings have high mental ability and much movement, whereas nearly all the other living beings have a single character and little moving, cf. *De Abstinentia* 3.7.2 and 3.8.7-9; Johnson (2015), 194.

54 Trans. Wilberding (2013), 92–3. In F 269 and F 270 Smith (= Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.40 and 2.8.41), Porphyry also points out that 'embodied human beings have a significant amount of power of self-determination,' see Wilberding (2013), 132 and 152 n.46 on these fragments, and (2013), 143–4 for their translation; Johnson (2015), 192–4 on these fragments.

> τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὲν ἢ ἐκ προγόνων γενέσθαι ἀγαθῶν ἢ κάλλους τυχεῖν σωματικοῦ διὰ φύσεως ἐπορίσθη ἢ τύχης, πλὴν ὅτι τούτων οὐδὲν ἦν ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν δῆλον. Τὰς δέ γε τῶν τεχνῶν ἀναλήψεις καὶ τὰς τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπιστημῶν τε καὶ <τὰς> τῶν πολιτικῶν βίων ἀρχῶν τε διώξεις καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἐκ τοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν ἠρτῆσθαι συμβέβηκεν, εἰ καί τινα δυσεπίτευκτα, τῷ καὶ τῆς ἔξωθεν προσδεῖσθαι συλλήψεως, δι᾽ οὗ εἰς τὸ τυχεῖν δύσκολα καὶ ἀποθέσθαι οὐ ῥᾴδια, ὥσπερ ἀρχὰς καὶ τυραννίδας καὶ δημαγωγίας. Πάντα μὲν οὖν τὰ τοιαῦτα ἠρτῆσθαι συμβέβηκεν <ἐκ> τῆς προαιρέσεως, ἡ δὲ τεῦξις αὐτῶν οὐ πάντως ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν.
>
> Now with non-rational [animals], since they are deprived of self-determination, this character is formed as an addition either naturally or as a result of training by its owner, whereas in the case of human beings, coming from a good family or being endowed with bodily beauty is provided by nature or by chance, except that clearly none of these things was in our power. By contrast, the acquisition of skills and habits and knowledge, as well as the acquisition of political lives and the pursuit of positions of power and all such things – these things happen to depend on what is in our power, even if some [of these things] are difficult to achieve because they depend on our receiving a certain contribution from the outside world, for which reason they are [in some cases] difficult to attain and [in other cases] not easy to turn one's back on, e.g., positions of power and leadership and tyrannies. All of these sorts of things happen to depend on deliberate choice, although achieving them is not completely in our power.

In accordance with the division of the features of the self-determined life into two, those features inherited from ancestors, such as having a fine appearance and coming from a good family, are naturally beyond what is within our power. However, Porphyry emphasises that our acquisition of skills, habits and knowledge and our ways of using them is, to some extent, within our power in this world, despite the fact that the achievement of some of them depends on external conditions.[55] On the external conditions, as Wilberding rightly points out[56] that Porphyry might be referring to *Republic* 490e-497d, in which Plato speaks of some external conditions causing the corruption of the philosophical nature of the soul; for example, physical beauty, height, living in a big city and descending from a powerful and wealthy family can cause the soul to become

55 Wilberding (2011), 131–2.
56 Wilberding (2013), 94.

excessively arrogant and confident (*Rep*. 494c-d). If we apply the influences of those external conditions to the lives of Odysseus, it can be concluded that the Homeric hero is an example of a rare soul which has a philosophical nature,[57] a soul that never lost its resistance against any external condition.

2.2 *The Goddess Athena as symbol of* Phronesis

Porphyry describes the goddess Athena as 'practical wisdom' (φρόνησις, *De Antro* 32.12), together with the olive tree, which Homer places near the cave and at the head of the harbour in *Odyssey* 13.102, symbolising the *phronesis* of the God (Zeus or the Demiurge). The concept of salvation of the soul is found in Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with *phronesis* while Odysseus represents the soul descending into *genesis*, but will return back to his fatherland. Before exploring the role and meaning of *phronesis*, namely the goddess Athena, in the process of the soul's journey towards the intelligible realm, let us now discuss Porphyry's characterisation of the goddess in his other works and how we can apply them to the context of *De Antro*.

In *De Antro* and in his *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* (F 359.60-62 Smith = Eus., *PE* 3.11.31-32), Porphyry describes Athena as a symbol of *phronesis*;[58] and he also identifies her with the Moon in *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, without giving any detail:

> Ὅπερ δὲ Ἀπόλλων ἐν ἡλίῳ, τοῦτο Ἀθηνᾶ ἐν σελήνῃ· ἔστι γὰρ τῆς φρονήσεως σύμβολον, Ἀθρηνᾶ τις οὖσα.
>
> What Apollo is in the Sun, that is Athena in the Moon; for she is symbol of practical wisdom, a kind of Athrena.

Various passages in Porphyry's commentary on the story of Atlantis are related to his associations of Athena with the Moon and *phronesis*. Porphyry considers Hephaistos as 'skilful mind' (τὸν τεχνικὸν νοῦν) and the Earth as the sublunar sphere, while Athena as the Moon receives the seeds of skilful souls from

57 See *Rep*. 491b1-2: φιλόσοφος γενέσθαι, ὀλιγάκις ἐν ἀνθρώποις φύεσθαι καὶ ὀλίγας. See Johnson (2015), 201 for a brief discussion of F 271.110-122 (= Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.8.42) where Porphyry refers to Homer's *Odyssey* 1.32-34 for the self-determined life; Porphyry gives the moral responsibility to the humans through making the souls have the power of self-determination.

58 See Simonini (2010), 233: Athrena is the etymology from the verb ἀθρεῖν since she is the sort of person who looks at things. See also my 'The Goddess Athena as Symbol of *Phronesis* in Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs*' in *the International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 12 (2018), 1–12.

Hephaistos and the Earth.[59] Elsewhere, Proclus details previous comments on Plato's statement that the temperate balance of seasons (in Attica) creates wise men (τὴν δὲ εὐκρασίαν τῶν ὡρῶν τὴν τῶν φρονίμων οἰστικὴν, *In Tim.* 1.162.11-12 Diehl, on *Tim.* 24c5-7). Porphyry takes εὐρᾶσία as being good adaptation (εὐαρμοστία) because the God divides the whole of space in the demiurgic order and each part of the space accepts souls suitable to it, that belonging to Ares the more spirited ones, that belonging to Apollo the prophetic ones, that belonging to Asclepius those skilled in the art of medicine, and that belonging to Athena the wise ones (αἱ φρόνιμοι).[60] Once again, Porphyry associates Athena with the Moon because the soul acquires its spirited and mild character in the Moon (F 22 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.165.16-23 Diehl, on *Tim.* 24c7-d3). Accordingly, the dual aspect of Athena emerges as the lover of war and the lover of wisdom in the soul:[61]

> Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πορφύριος ἐν σελήνῃ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν ὑποθέμενος ψυχὰς ἐκεῖθεν κατιέναι φησὶ τό τε θυμοειδὲς ἅμα καὶ τὸ πρᾶον ἐχούσας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φιλοσόφους καὶ φιλοπολέμους οὔσας, τῶν ἐν Ἐλευσῖνι μυσταγωγούς, ἐπείπερ καὶ ἀπὸ Μουσαίου τοῦ Σεληνιακοῦ τὸ γένος τοῖς ἐν Ἐλευσῖνι τῶν μυστηρίων ἡγουμένοις, ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ ὁ Ερμῆς ἐκεῖ περὶ Σελήνην ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τὸ Κηρύκων, ὥς φησι, γένος.
>
> Porphyry, placing Athena in the Moon, says that souls come down from there with both a spirited and a gentle side. Consequently they are both war- and wisdom-loving, escorts of the initiates at Eleusis, assuming that the family of those who lead the mysteries at Eleusis is from Musaeus of the Moon, and assuming further that Hermes and the family of Heralds is among them there in the region of the Moon, as he claims.

If we apply this dual aspect of Athena to Porphyry's identification of the goddess in *De Antro* 32.12, during the ascent of the soul, the wisdom-loving side of Athena predominates over her war-loving side. The war-loving side of the goddess manifests itself in the Odyssean struggle against the sea and water-divinities, which symbolise the material world. If Odysseus is assumed to be the soul under the process of ascending to the intelligible realm, Athena

59 F 16 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.147.6-24 Diehl, on *Tim.* 23d4-e2. Porphyry also associates the Moon with Asclepius as the lunar intellect generated from Athena (F 20 Sodano = Procl., *In Tim.* 1.159.25-27 Diehl). See also Tarrant (2007), 257–8; Dillon (2009), 287–9.

60 F 21 Sodano; see also Tarrant (2007), 260–1.

61 Trans. Tarrant (2007), 264.

operates as the guiding *daimon* of Odysseus when she gives him beggar's garments to wear and advises him to leave all the valuable gifts of the Phoenicians in the cave. Homer's description of Athena who is the first to meet Odysseus after disembarking on Ithaca seems to imply that Odysseus is in the lunar sphere of Athena and in the preparatory phase of his ascent towards the intelligible realm.

In his identification of Athena with *phronesis*, Porphyry, in some way, follows the Platonic tradition. According to Dillon, the idea that Athena symbolises the Platonic Forms in the mind of God derives from the Old Academy, particularly Xenocrates.[62] He remarks, 'Athena/Dike as the Logos of God is part of the Greek philosophical tradition upon which he (Philo of Alexandria) is drawing, and that tradition is an essentially Platonist one, tinged with Stoicism and enlivened with Neopythagorean mysticism and number-theory.'[63] In his *De Opificio mundi* (100), Philo of Alexandria implicitly refers to Athena and describes her as 'motherless' and 'produced from the head of Zeus. Because of being the Logos of God, the goddess functions as casting the Forms or *logoi* over the material world. Porphyry's interpretation of Athena also finds support in Apuleius' *De Deo Socratis* where Apuleius links Socrates' *daimon* with Homer's Minerva/Athena and the goddess functions in a way as Achilles' guardian *daimon* (*De Deo Socratis* 20),[64] presenting herself in the assembly of the Greeks, but only seen by Achilles, to moderate the wrath of the hero (*De Deo Socratis* 11).[65] Later, Apuleius mentions Athena identified with *phronesis*/*prudentia*, and depicts her as the companion of Odysseus, or the guiding *daimon*, who assists the Homeric hero in overcoming all the toils and labours during his return to the homeland (nec aliud te in eodem Ulixe Homerus docet, qui semper ei comitem voluit esse prudentiam, quam poëtico ritu Minervam nuncupavit, *De Deo Socratis* 24).[66]

We find the etymology of Athena's name in *Cratylus* 407a8-c2 in which Plato says that contemporary interpreters of Homer believed that he represents Athena as 'mind' (νοῦς) and as 'understanding' (διάνοια). According to the maker of names, Plato claims that Athena is 'the mind of God' (ἡ θεοῦ νόησις)

62 Dillon (2005a), 105–6 for a discussion of Xenocrates' treatment of 'mainstream mythology' and Philo's interpretation of Athena.

63 Dillon (2005a), 106.

64 Nock (1947), 109–12.

65 See ibid., 106–7 for various descriptions of Athena/Minerva as the protector of the heroes such as Odysseus, Telemachus, Hercules, and the emperors, such as Domitian, in antiquity.

66 Ibid., 110–1 rightly observes, 'Comes is used twice in the sense of the divine companion,' and adds, 'the analogy was natural. Athena was commonly allegorized as wisdom, and τὸ δαιμόνιον, while used of the sign of Socrates, was also a traditional term for divinity in general undifferentiated form.'

because of her possession of an unequalled knowledge about divine things (τὰ θεῖα νοοῦσα). As regards his connection of the stem *rhe-* with flowing, in *Cratylus* 411d, Plato also points out that *phronesis* is the intelligence of conveying and flowing, comprised of φορά, νόησις and ῥόος, so that Plato's definition of *phronesis* suits the behaviour of one who advises and guides Odysseus by activating his rational side.

As regards the question of how *phronesis* can be defined in the context of *De Antro*, it seems that, in Porphyry's reading of Homer, *phronesis* means knowledge of the future, as a result of experience and good judgment. Porphyry asserts, 'the cosmos is the finished product of the judgment (*phronesis*) of God and his intellectual nature, and not the result of a coincidence, random purpose or irrational chance' (ὁ κόσμος οὐκ εἰκῆ οὐδ' ὡς ἔτυχε γέγονεν, ἀλλ' ἔστι φρονήσεως θεοῦ καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως ἀποτέλεσμα, *De Antro* 32.8-10). The early warning and advice of Athena to Odysseus also prove that the goddess manifests herself as knowledge of the future. In fact, Porphyry directly assigns Athena's guidance of Odysseus to Homer, stating in *De Antro* 34.1-2 that it is the poet who says that 'every foreign possession must be put away in the cave' (δεῖν τὸ ἄντρον ἀποθέσθαι πᾶν τὸ ἔξωθεν κτῆμα). Furthermore, Homer's placement of the olive tree near the cave of the nymphs is not a coincidence but the result of his excellence, since the olive tree as the plant of Athena also symbolises God's *phronesis*, and because of its intellectual nature and wisdom the olive tree stands apart from the cave (*De Antro* 32.12-33.3):

> (32.12-33.3) κρατογενοῦς δ' οὔσης τῆς θεοῦ, οἰκεῖον τόπον ὁ θεολόγος ἐξεῦρεν ἐπὶ κρατὸς τοῦ λιμένος αὐτὴν καθιερώσας, σημαίνων δι' αὐτῆς ὡς οὐκ ἐξ αὐτοματισμοῦ τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο καὶ τύχης ἀλόγου ἔργον γέγονεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι φύσεως νοερᾶς καὶ σοφίας ἀποτέλεσμα χωριστῆς μὲν οὔσης ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πλησίον δὲ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς το σύμπαντος λιμένος ἱδρυμένης. ἀειθαλὴς δὲ οὖσα ἡ ἐλαία φέρει τι ἰδίωμα οἰκειότατον ταῖς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τροπαῖς τῶν ψυχῶν, αἷς τὸ ἄντρον καθιέρωται.
>
> (32.12-33.3) Since the goddess was born from the head of the God (Zeus), the theologian (Homer) found a suitable place, in consecrating the olive tree at the head of the harbour, signifying by means of the olive tree that the entire cosmos has not come into being spontaneously, and it was not the work of irrational chance; but that it is the finished product of intellectual nature and wisdom, existing separately from the cave, as the olive tree is situated nearby at the head of the entire harbour. For the olive tree is evergreen, it presents a unique feature, very suitable for the changes (solstices) of souls in the cosmos, to whom the cave was consecrated.

For Porphyry, Homer's image of the olive tree and Athena as separate from the cave means that acquisition of *phronesis* is the first step in achieving a state of impassivity towards all kinds of pleasures, emotions, power and wealth which belong to the material world. Porphyry underlines the 'evergreenness of the olive tree' (ἀειθαλὴς δὲ οὖσα ἡ ἐλαία, *De Antro* 33.1), emphasising that 'the cosmos is governed by the intellectual nature and is guided by eternal and evergreen *phronesis*' (διοικεῖται δὲ καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὑπὸ νοερᾶς φύσεως φρονήσει ἀιδίῳ καὶ ἀειθαλεῖ ἀγόμενος, *De Antro* 33.10-11). The guidance of eternal and evergreen *phronesis,* located at the top of the cosmos, is apparently in sharp contrast with the process of *genesis* which is reflected in 'ever-flowing water,' ἀένᾰον ὕδωρ[67] under the protection of Naiad nymphs at the bottom.[68]

We can find a close connection between Porphyry's identification of Athena with *phronesis*, and the cathartic virtues in *Sententia* 32 mentioned before,[69] in which Porphyry formulates the Neoplatonic doctrine of virtues, namely the political, the cathartic, the theoretical, and the paradigmatic ones. All the virtues above the civic ones are contemplative, and purify and direct the soul to the intelligible realm.[70] The relevant passages of *Sententia* 32 can explain the levels of virtue at which Odysseus may be active, and how Athena or *phronesis* functions in the process of his ascent through the intelligible.

In *Sententia* 32, Porphyry, following and quoting Plotinus' *Ennead* 1.2.1.16-21, claims that *phronesis* is connected with the reasoning faculty of the soul at the level of political virtue, in a similar way as courage connects with the part of the soul subject to anger; self-control with agreement and harmony of appetite and reason and justice with accomplishment (ἔστι φρόνησις μὲν περὶ τὸ λογιζόμενον, *Sententia* 32.10–11). The political virtues operate as intermediate

67 *De Antro* 12.10-11; Pl., *Leg*. 966e2: ἀέναον οὐσίαν is used for the substance of the material world. See Dillon (2005a), 100–1 for a discussion of Xenocrates' use of the term.

68 Nymph as a fifth kind of living thing, made of water, occurs in *Epinomis* 985b, a dialogue which proceeds from the Old Academy, Dillon (1996b), 287, along with the four kinds of living things made of earth, fire, ether, and air (Epinomis 981c-985a), and it is also defined as demigod (ἡμίθεος), sometimes seen, sometimes hidden and invisible, presenting wonder through its obscure appearance. See also Plutarch, *De Defectu* 415c and Procl., *In Remp*. 1.125.29-30 Kroll for nymphs as *daimonic* figures. Porphyry implies these images of Nymphs as the opposite power (maleficient), unseen and absolutely imperceptible to human senses in *De Abstinentia* 2.39.1. The *daimones* dwelling in water are well-attested in the *Chaldean Oracles* (ὑδροβατῆρας, F 92 des Places = Procl., *In Tim*. 3.110.4-5 Diehl, and νύμφαι πηγαῖαι καὶ ἐνύδρια πνεύματα πάντα, F 216 des PLaces = Lydus, *De Mensibus* 3.8.1-7); see Majercik (2013), 84–5 and 132–3 for the fragments.

69 Simonini (2010), 240 also refers to *Sententia* 32 and says: 'nel *De antro* l'incontro con *phronesis*, sedere nudo sotto l'ulivo, è immagine la progressione dell'individuo sulla via della catarsi, in cui la saggezza consiste nel non seguire il corpo e nel pensare con purezza.'

70 Plot., *Enn*. 1.2.5.4-12 and 1.2.6.20-28; Remes (2005), 183 for the resemblance of the process to the Stoic *apatheia* rather than the Academic and Aristotelian *metriopatheia*.

virtues which prepare the soul to attain the next level. After the soul's mastering of civic virtues, the cathartic virtues conduct the soul towards abstinence from bodily activities. At the level of the cathartic virtues, having *phronesis* means disallowing possession of self by bodily thoughts and weaknesses, and solitude of mind, a task accomplished through pure thinking.[71]

In *Sententia* 32.45-50, according to the comparison of the political virtues with the cathartic virtues in terms of their capacities, the cathartic virtues can purify the soul from twofold badness, one a result of the soul's association with inferior things, the other result of excessive passions. The political virtues enable the soul only to moderate passions, whereas the cathartic virtues liberate it from evil, that is, from the association with its inferiors; this makes the cathartic virtues more honourable than the political virtues.[72] Regarding the characteristics of all virtues:[73] the paradigmatic virtues relate to Intellect and agree with its essence; the theoretical virtues relate to the soul contemplating Intellect and filling themselves from it. The cathartic virtues of the soul of man relate to those who are purified from body and from the irrational passions and, lastly, the political virtues relate to restraining the activity of the irrational soul and to moderating passions.

The following passage of *Sententia* 32 is particularly important, for it may hold significant clues that help us identify which virtues Odysseus experiences, and the role of Athena as symbol of *phronesis* in this process:[74]

> (32.83-96) τῶν μὲν γὰρ πολιτικῶν μέτρον ἐπιθεῖναι τοῖς πάθεσι πρὸς τὰς ἐν τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν ἐνεργείας· τῶν δὲ καθαρτικῶν τελέως τῶν παθῶν ἀποστῆσαι {τὸ} τέως μέτρον λαμβανόντων· τῶν δὲ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργῆσαι μηδὲ τοῦ ἀποστῆσαι ἐκ τῶν παθῶν εἰς ἔννοιαν ἐρχομένων· τῶν δὲ μηδὲν πρὸς νοῦν ἐχουσῶν τὴν ἐνέργειαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ οὐσίᾳ εἰς συνδρομὴν ἀφιγμένων <**>. διὸ καὶ ὁ μὲν κατὰ τὰς πρακτικὰς ἐνεργῶν σπουδαῖος ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τὰς καθαρτικὰς δαιμόνιος ἄνθρωπος ἢ καὶ δαίμων ἀγαθός, ὁ δὲ κατὰ μόνας τὰς πρὸς τὸν νοῦν θεός, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τὰς παραδειγματικὰς θεῶν πατήρ. Ἐπιμελητέον οὖν μάλιστα τῶν καθαρτικῶν ἡμῖν σκεψαμένοις, ὅτι τούτων μὲν ἡ τεῦξις ἐν τῷ βίῳ τούτῳ, διὰ τούτων δὲ καὶ ἡ εἰς τὰς τιμιωτέρας ἄνοδος.
>
> (32.83-96) That of the civic virtues is to impose measure on the passions for the performance of activities which conform to nature; that of the purificatory (cathartic) virtues is to separate completely from the passions

71 *Sententia* 32.18-32; See Plot., *Enn.* 1.2.3.11-15.

72 See Plot., *Enn.* 1.2.4.1-23.

73 *Sententia* 32.71-78.

74 Trans. Dillon (2005), 813.

> that which has just taken on measure; that of the next level (the contemplative virtues) is to direct one's activity towards intellect without any longer giving thought to separating oneself from the passions; while as for that of those virtues (the paradigmatic virtues) whose role it is no longer to direct their activity towards intellect, but which have actually come into confluence with its essence, <it is no longer possible to describe their activity>.[75] In view of this, then, he who acts in accordance with the practical (civic) virtues is agreed to be a 'good man,' he who acts in accordance with the purificatory ones is a daemonic man, or even a good daemon, one who acts only according to those which are directed towards intellect is a god, and one who practises the paradigmatic virtues is a 'father of gods.' We ought therefore to direct our attention most of all to the purificatory virtues, basing ourselves on the reflection that the attainment of these is possible in this life, and that through these [that] an ascent may be made to the more august levels.

According to this passage, the theoretical and the paradigmatic virtues are only attainable hereafter, since the acquisition of the former would make a god of humans, and of the latter would make him the father of gods. These two virtues should be a privilege of only a small group of people, particularly the philosophers.[76] In that case, we may conclude that the souls who fulfil the goal of achieving the theoretical and the paradigmatic virtues will no longer be subjected to embodiment. Although we know from his autobiographical experiences that Plotinus spiritually claims to have achieved the objective of the paradigmatic virtues by union with Intellect, it was not a permanent state because of his staying in the earthly life.[77] Porphyry strongly believes that human

75 See Dillon (2005), 813 n. 142.

76 Also see Shaw (1995), 14 for Porphyry's view that 'permanent escape is possible only for the philosopher, not for the common man…Those incapable of the philosophic escape performed theurgic rites to purify their irrational elements, but such souls were never free,' Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 10.32.5-25.

77 As Plotinus would have regarded himself as attaining the theoretical level, (*VPlot*. 8 where Porphyry mentions his preoccupation with the life in contemplation, see also Dillon (1996a), 315–35 for Plotinus' ethical theory; Gerson (1998), 170–4 for a brief discussion of his theory of virtues), Porphyry might have believed that the theoretical virtues are also attainable in his life. There are some passages in *De Abstinentia* 2, which are connected with the characteristic of the theoretical virtues in *Sententia* 32.55–62, as earlier discussed in Chapter 1, 'Porphyry and *On the Cave of the Nymphs*': in *De Abstinentia* 2.34 he says that the sacrifice to the god who rules over all is fulfilled in dispassion of the soul and contemplation of the god; *De Abstinentia* 2.43 for becoming like God through dispassion; *De Abstinentia* 2.45 a godly man for intellectual sacrifice with pure dispassion in the soul,

beings may achieve the objective of the cathartic virtues, that is, achieve an entire detachment of the soul from the passions, in this life. According to him, the person who fulfils the cathartic virtues is called a divine man or good *daimon*, whereas Porphyry uses the epithet 'sage,' σπουδαῖος, for the person at the level of the political virtues.[78]

The ascription of the virtues of *Sententia* 32 to the character of Odysseus described in *De Antro* 35.10-17, previously quoted, leads us to deduce that the Homeric hero is situated at the early phase of the cathartic virtues because he dresses up as a beggar after stripping naked, with the help of the goddess Athena, namely *phronesis*. The predominance of *phronesis* leads Odysseus to contemplate how he would rid his soul of all the deceitful passions and foreign possessions which belong to the material world. Dressing up in beggars' clothes suggests that Odysseus is still living an earthly life and his inclination towards bodily needs has not as yet reached the minimum. Beggars' clothes seem to symbolise the bond which relates Odysseus to the material world. Porphyry considers 'being stripped of the rags' inadequate to overpower all toils, since passive involvement in the earthly life does not guarantee a permanent unity with the intelligible realm, even though we may advance to this unity in the hereafter. Knowledge of the material world will pave the way for Odysseus to become a *daimonic* man or a good man; however, he still has some difficulties to overcome. As for Athena, as a symbol of *phronesis,* she can be considered the guiding *daimon* of Odysseus, operating as a superior entity which the hero needs until he leads his life according to the principles of intellect.

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with a body which is light and not weighed down with the alien juices of other creatures or with passions of the soul, trans. Clark (2000), 69, 73, and 74.

78 See Chase (2004b), 15 for the Stoic technical term for 'sage,' σπουδαῖος.

Conclusion

As generally agreed, Porphyry's purpose in explaining the doctrines of Plato and Plotinus is mainly to develop parameters for the salvation of the soul, and throughout his various works, this purpose manifests itself in his ethical concern for the soul. The concept of the salvation of the soul is associated with the purification of the soul, and this purification is dependent on what part of the soul is targeted. For example, according to Porphyry, theurgy and rituals play significant roles in the purification of the lower (spiritual) part of the soul. On the other hand, a life dedicated to philosophy and its ethical practice, allows the soul to attain the intelligible realm and permanently escape from the cycle of *genesis*.

Beginning from the assumption that Porphyry uses his allegorical interpretations in *On the Cave of the Nymphs* to convey his own thoughts and to educate his disciples, most likely prospective philosophers, in important philosophical ideas, throughout this book I have offered an exegesis of *De Antro* in the context of his wider philosophical oeuvre. More precisely, I have endeavoured to show how the treatise fits in with his other more straightforward philosophical works, particularly with respect to his interests in the salvation of the soul and the relationship between the soul and body. Like Cornutus, Porphyry might have used *De Antro* for didactic purposes.[1] The treatise is a perfect example of Porphyry's approach to the allegorical interpretation of the Homeric verses, in which he questions all the inconsistencies and paradoxes of his verses and provides various allegorical interpretation for them.[2]

Reading *De Antro* as part of Porphyry's corpus of works relating to the salvation of the soul, I have systematically compared it to his other works that mainly deal with this issue and are complementary to *De Antro*. In particular, I have proposed that relevant sections of *De Antro* should be read alongside, not only Porphyry's commentary on the myth of Er, but also his commentary on the *Timaeus*, *De Abstinentia* and *Sententiae*.

Chapter 1 has examined the textual structure and composition of the treatise. As an introductory section, rather than summarising a long and rich tradition of allegorical exegesis and allegorical thinking, followed by many eminent literary critics, grammarians, and philosophers, my intention here has been to highlight those who were influence on Porphyry's exegetical approach and

1 See Chapter 1, 'Preliminary Remarks on Allegorical Interpretation in Later Platonism.'

2 Cf. Hoffman (1994), 17–18, 154, 166–7, and 172; Smith (2011), 40–1; Johnson (2013), 278–9 for Porphyry's criticism of Christian exegesis of the Old and the New Testament.

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methodology in treatise. Most important among them – and therefore discussed in a separate section – were the Stoics, including Cornutus and Crates of Mallos, and the Neopythagoreans, Numenius and Cronius, who are Porphyry's main sources in *De Antro* and highly influential figures in Neoplatonism.

In agreement with Dillon and Edwards, I have suggested that *De Antro* is a complementary text to Porphyry's commentary on the myth of Er in *Republic* 10, based upon the idea that *De Antro* and the *Republic* share two common key symbols, the cave and Odysseus. This affinity is reflected in the basic theme of the treatise and Porphyry's overarching aim: the ultimate goal of the treatise is to show the way of salvation for the individual soul, which is to lead a philosophical life. This implies that Porphyry's aim in *De Antro* is ethical – his common attitude in other commentaries, as I have here shown at various places – and is compatible with Plato's aim in the myth of Er.

I have then analysed the two key concepts of Neoplatonic allegory, image and symbol, which Porphyry also uses for the cave and Odysseus. These two concepts are in fact used by the Pythagoreans for educational purposes: the natural reality perceived by the senses is introduced through images, the abstract principles perceived by mind through symbols. I have argued that the cave bears both of these aspects: on the one hand, it is a natural reality, but on the other hand, with its mystical elements, it is an abstract principle grasped by the mind. The discussion has included Porphyry's methodology, particularly how he justifies interpreting Homer's verses by raising issues which are thought to be contradictory. I have also discussed an important point of *De Antro*: Porphyry's identification of Homer as a theologian, an idea being rooted in the view that texts are written by 'divinely inspired' poets whom Porphyry considers as theological authorities, thus turning Homer's verses into divine oracles.

In *De Antro* 5 to 9, Porphyry explores the philosophical and religious precedents of viewing the cosmos or material world as a cave, the identification that lies at the basis of his allegorical interpretation of Homer's lines. The image is a common one, which is found, for example, in the Pythagoreans, the Orphics, Plato, Empedocles and in the cult of Mithras; and Porphyry elaborately argues its appropriateness (whence its popularity). In the first part of Chapter 2, under the title 'The Cave as Symbol and Image of Cosmos,' I have examined key relevant philosophical concepts relating to the material world in the Presocratic tradition such as Anaximander's *apeiron*, the flux theory of Heraclitus, and Plato's treatment of caves and caverns as hollows in the *Phaedrus*.

I have then analysed Porphyry's discussion of two ostensibly contradictory features of the cave in Homer's description: its loveliness and its darkness. I have examined the loveliness of the cave with reference to the material realm's

'participation in the Forms' in *De Antro* 6.5, starting from Plato's idea that the cosmos is generated from the Form of Good in *Timaeus*, alongside the relevant parts of Porphyry's and Proclus' commentaries on the *Timaeus*. I have sought to show a connection between the material world and the second One at the level of Life in Porphyry's commentary on the *Parmenides*, an issue that could be developed further in future research. I have made a connection between the darkness of the cave, resulting from the fact that it is perceived by Intellect, and Plotinus' and Porphyry's conceptualisation of Matter and its participation in the Forms, and I have concluded that the cave's darkness reflects the ontological relation, immediate or mediated, between substrata of the cosmos from top to bottom, that is, from the intelligible realm to Matter.

The second part of Chapter 2 opened with an exploration of Porphyry's references to the Mithraic cave in the context of his *De Abstinentia* and Origen's *Contra Celsum*. The main concern of this part was to examine Porphyry's identification of Mithras as the Maker and Father of the cosmos with the Platonic Demiurge in the *Timaeus* in comparison with Numenius' ontological principles. Taking into account how the epithet 'Maker and Father' operates in the Neoplatonic metaphysical and cosmological scheme in accordance with Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus*, I have concluded that Porphyry's Mithras is a demiurgic god whose creative aspect is predominant. Lastly, I have ventured to argue that Mithras, as Master of *genesis*, as he is portrayed in *De Antro* 24.13, may be considered to have a cosmological aspect at the lower ontological level.

In the final section of Chapter 2, I have discussed Porphyry's references to the cave in Empedocles and the cave of Plato's *Republic* in *De Antro* 8. Porphyry's quotation from the *Republic* ensures that the cave in question is the material world as a prison-like cave, filled with shadows, from which one must escape in order to access the intelligible realm that lies beyond it. I discussed the fact that Porphyry's implication of analogies of the divided line and the Sun is an allusion to the movement of the state of minds from the visible realm to the intelligible realm, which we may associated with his doctrine of virtues, the political, the cathartic, the theoretical and the paradigmatic virtues in *Sententia* 32. This association is also deemed to be the beginning stage of enlightenment, that is, the realisation of the darkness of the cave or the material realm through intellect in *De Antro* 6.5-6.[3]

Chapter 3 has investigated the sections of *De Antro* which deal with the body-soul relationship against the background of Porphyry's metaphysics but also of common Greek symbolic thinking, which underlies Porphyry's associations

3 See Chapter 2, 'The Cave in Mind.'

and identifications of *genesis* with wetness and pleasures. Porphyry identifies the Naiad nymphs as *daimones* who preside over *genesis* (γενεθλίοις δαίμοσιν, *De Antro* 12.5), and similarly, he speaks of a certain '*daimon* of *genesis*' (τὸν γενέθλιον δαίμονα, *De Antro* 35.7) – whom Odysseus must appease due to his blinding of Polyphemus, namely Thoosa.

Those brief statements, along with Porphyry's multifaceted identification of the Naiad nymphs as souls in the process of falling into generation, and *dunameis* that preside over *genesis* (*De Antro* 10.8-9), give an impression of Porphyry's demonology, but a rather inadequate one. In order to elucidate this, I have discussed the dual aspects of *daimones* in *De Antro,* based on the assumption that Porphyry's interpretive practice should be read from both a macrocosmic and a microcosmic perspective. True in essence to Plato's description of *daimones* in *Timaeus* 40d6-9 as the invisible gods, *daimones*, figuratively as Naiad nymphs, are closely related to entities which cause the descent of souls in Porphyry's commentary on the story of Atlantis in *Timaeus* 20d8-9 (F 10 Sodano), which is preserved in Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (*In Tim.* 1.77.6-24 Diehl). I have related Porphyry's tripartite division of *daimones* and souls, some of which are in the process of *genesis*, others in the process of ascending to the higher realm, to the celestial regions distinguished in *De Antro* 29.1-3. Another key issue discussed in the section of *De Antro* is the distinction between the guiding spirit and the idea of humans' souls as their *daimones*, the former having its source in *Timaeus* 90a, the latter in *Timaeus* 90c. Thus, I have suggested that Odysseus might be deemed one of the heroic or divine souls allocated to the South in *De Antro* 29.2, whereas Athena is his guiding spirit allocated to the East, ruling the rational part of Odysseus' soul and leading him to the divine. Based on the idea that 'the individual souls have received a *daimonic* lot' in F 10.8 of Porphyry's commentary on the *Timaeus*, Athena might operate as Odysseus' rational principle, since he has not, as yet, completed his self-improvement. This aspect of Athena is compatible with *Ennead* 3.4.3, in which Plotinus deems to be the guiding spirit an entity superior to us. The assignment of the goddess Athena to Odysseus' rational principle is also in accordance with her identification with *phronesis*, as discussed in Chapter 4.

According to Porphyry's treatment of the female mythological divinities, Amphitrite and the Naiad nymphs – as generative powers in *On Images,* as well as in *De Antro*, I have analysed the possible function of the Naiad nymphs as *dunameis* in the process of body-creation (σωματουργία, *De Antro* 14.3), based on the fact that the formation of flesh proceeds 'through blood and from blood' (δι' αἵματος δὲ καὶ ἐξ αἱμάτων ἡ σαρκογονία, *De Antro* 14.10-11). The statement 'blood and moist seed are dear to [the souls]' (αἱμά τε γὰρ ταύταις καὶ ὁ δίυγρος γόνος φίλος, *De Antro* 10.20-11.1), has prompted me to examine the formation of

flesh with reference to Porphyry's conception of the development of embryos in *Ad Gaurum*. Because in *Ad Gaurum* the formation of flesh belongs to the first stage of the formation of the embryo in the womb before limbs and organs are articulated, I have come to the conclusion that Porphyry's interpretation of the Homeric image of the Naiad nymphs weaving a sea-purple garment reflects the creation of the embryo and the physiological phase.

Another philosophical concept in the context of embodiment in *De Antro* is the pneumatic body, an intermediary link between the soul and the body. To complement and explain *De Antro* 11.8-12.1, I have used *Sententia* 29, in which Porphyry classifies the four major phases of the pneumatic body, as the soul obtains different substances. According to *Sententia* 29, the aethereal body is generated from the substances of the first five planets, and the solar and lunar bodies are obtained from the Sun and Moon. The earthly body consists of heavy and moist *pneuma* generated from exhalation (ἀναθυμίασις, *De Antro* 11.3-6) in the sublunary region, reflecting the process of embodiment of the soul, as presented in *De Antro*. Lastly, in this Chapter, I have discussed the Orphic poem preserved in *De Antro* 16 in order to analyse how Porphyry evaluates the deception of the divine principle through honey as a symbol of pleasure. Porphyry's analogy between Poros in Plato's *Symposium* and Kronos, who become inebriated by nectar and honey, respectively, indicates the dominance of irrationality in the soul.

In the first part of Chapter 4, I have discussed the various exegeses of Homer's double gates provided by Porphyry, which is relevant to the journey of the soul through the sensible world. They are variously called the gates of Cancer and Capricorn or solstitial gates in the Mithraic cosmological model, the gates of the Sun by Homer, and the gates of the Sun and the Moon by the theologians. I have mainly examined the gates of the Sun and the Moon in *De Antro*, which have received less scholarly attention. Regarding their astrological aspect, as presented in *De Antro* 22.2-6, I have argued that the gates of the Sun and the Moon are related to the diurnal and nocturnal rotations of the seven planets according to the planetary order. I have compared the ascending path of the soul towards the Sun to the escape of the liberated prisoner from the Platonic cave, which can be interpreted as the soul's union with the intelligible realm. At the microcosmic level the path towards the Sun refers to the soul guided by rationality, whereas the path towards the Moon refers to the soul under the guidance of its irrational part. Taking a further step, the discussion brought Porphyry's comments on the gates of the Sun and the Moon within the scope of his division of the triad Being-Intellect-Life at the celestial level in his commentary on the *Timaeus* (F 79 Sodano), in which Porphyry mentions the dominant principles and goals of the Sun and the Moon.

In the second part of Chapter 4, I have examined the significant philosophical concepts in Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of Homer's image of Odysseus and Athena sitting under the olive tree and Odysseus' being stripped of his garments. I have argued that the core message of the treatise reflects Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with *phronesis*, along with the olive tree, which Homer puts near the cave, symbolising *nous*, the intellect that generates the cosmos and permeates it. At the microcosmic level *phronesis*, by which the rational part of the soul is guided, inspires the soul to incline towards the level of Intellect that is, away from damaging influences of the body to which the soul is enslaved and which confuses it with desires, passions, fears and illusory impressions, and prevents it from attaining the intelligible realm. The body and its desires lead us to conflict and unjust behaviour in order to gain wealth, status, power, and pleasure. Following Numenius, Porphyry with Plotinus reads the *Odyssey* as a whole in which Odysseus' laborious journey back to Ithaca and his escape from dangers, pleasures and other distractions along the way, symbolise the successful journey of the human soul to return to the 'fatherland' that is the realm of the intelligible. Homer's elaborate description of Odysseus' meeting with Athena, and of the cave of the nymphs and its surroundings, comes at an especially significant point in the poem. Having completed his long and laborious journey with the help of Athena/*phronesis*, Odysseus has returned to the place from which he started and in which he was born, and at Athena's suggestion he leaves all his material wealth and clothes in the cave. The Homeric hero, a soul who has stripped off his garments, is enlightened and liberated by wisdom, the ultimate goal of Neoplatonic philosophy.

I have suggested that Porphyry's identification of the goddess Athena with *phronesis* is best seen against the backdrop of the doctrine the levels of virtue of *Sententia* 32, in which Porphyry discusses the four stages of the Neoplatonic system of virtues. These stages gradually lead the soul to achieve human excellence through distinct mental endeavours. According to this doctrine, the cathartic virtues guide the soul away from bodily concerns. At this stage, *phronesis* directs the soul towards suppressing bodily thoughts and weaknesses, and operating in an introverted manner.

I have also examined two significant phrases in *De Antro* in connection with the purification of the soul or the ascent of the soul through the intelligible. The first phrase 'stripped of garments' (*De Antro* 35.13) is a metaphor also used in *De Abstinentia*, meaning the soul's freedom from corporeal things. I have demonstrated that this phrase is closely connected with the soul's 'self-detachment' from the body, while still living its corporeal life, which Smith calls 'spiritual death,' as being in the state of impassivity in this life. The second

phrase, 'the inexperienced or ignorant souls in the deeds of the sea and matter' (*De Antro* 35.15-16), hints at a conditional situation which Porphyry interprets as Odysseus or the soul being no more subjected to embodiment only when he has got rid of sea and matter. In this context, I have investigated to what extent one should detach oneself from the earthly life according to Porphyry, who endorses a simple and self-sufficient life, and the minimum involvement with material things. Lastly, I have discussed Porphyry's doctrine of free-will according to Porphyry's fragmentary treatise (F268 Smith), *On What Is In Our Power*, in which although only human souls have the power to choose the self-determined life, this life is not fully under our control because of the influences of inherited and acquired features in this world.

Having followed the journey of the soul from the realm of Matter to the intelligible realm, I have demonstrated the philosophical aspect of *De Antro* and Porphyry's ultimate aim of showing that 'philosophy is a way of life.' Whoever our guiding spirit be, whether Athena, Homer, or Porphyry, philosophy will make us better persons if we learn to perceive truths beyond what is said.

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